

COLLECTION
OF
BRITISH AUTHORS.

VOL. CCCLXV.

EVELYN MARSTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

COLLECTION

OF

BRITISH AUTHORS

FOR GIFT

WILLIAM WATSON

IN LONDON

VOL. I

P-22

EVELYN MARSTON.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF "EMILIA WYNDHAM," ETC.

(Marsh.)

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

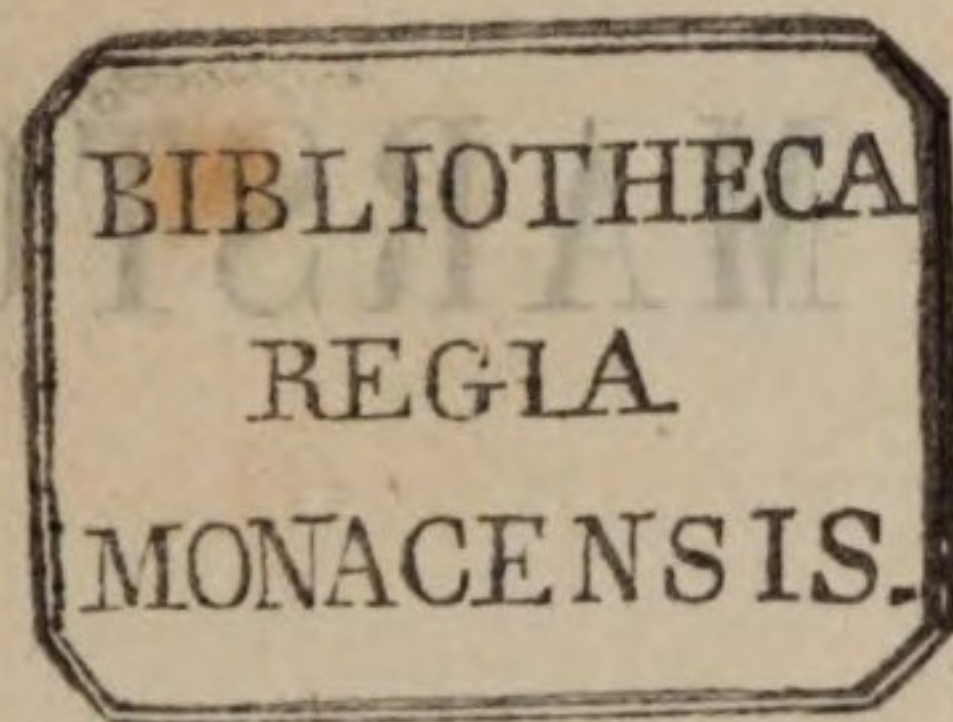
VOL. I.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

1856.

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"For we, most blest, even when to heaven we turn
Eyes bright with thanks for all that makes life dear,
Even then our trembling hearts have not to learn
Of sorrows that are here —
Of griefs that dimmed our dearest hours with tears —
Of bitter memories, that seem shadowing years."

W. C. BENNETT.

EVELYN MARSTON.

VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

"I stood,
And homeless, 'mid ten thousand homes,
And 'mid ten thousand tables pined, and wanted food."

WORDSWORTH.

It was a fearful night!

The depth of a most severe winter in the depths of a vast city. The neglected wildernesses of a great metropolis; forgotten in the busy hurry of an impatient, progressing world — regions from whence the tide is gradually ebbing, to visit more favoured shores — leaving, alas! how many stranded upon the forsaken beach!

I stood in one of the narrowest streets of Spital Fields — that, once industrious, crowded, and prospering bee-hive. — It was in this quarter that a little more than a century before the time of which I write, the victims of the most preposterous fanaticism, the basest breach of faith, and most extravagant impolicy that ever disgraced the annals of man — had taken refuge — Driven there by injustice and persecution received from

the hands of, perhaps, the most accomplished, the most refined, and possibly, one of the most really loving-hearted and God-fearing monarchs that ever sat upon the throne of France.

They came, an energetic, strong-minded, sturdy, obstinate race of martyrs — martyrs to opinion, perhaps, as well as to piety; a race of vigorous, persevering labourers, whether in God's vineyard or their own — to recover, by their indefatigable exertions, a portion of that prosperity which such qualities had obtained for them in the country of their birth — The envy excited by these had been a prime moving cause of the animosity of an idle, ill-disciplined, unprincipled Catholic population.

As ants, when their hillock city has been destroyed, may be seen, without hesitation or despondency, instantly setting about to repair the ruins — so it was with these brave Hugonots. Wherever they settled — in Prussia, Germany, Holland, England, it was all the same. They have everywhere left their indelible traces, by ineffaceable advantages bequeathed to the hospitable societies, which, in spite of all the threatenings of a most formidable power, held out the arms of refuge to these homeless multitudes.

Here, gardens and fruit trees are introduced — there, some other invention or industry — in England, among many other valuable sources of wealth, that of the silk-weaving in Spital Fields. The storm had been thickening in the horizon many years before it finally broke over

their heads; and it would appear that numerous members of the rich and provident body of the French Protestants had been beforehand with disaster, and had already lodged considerable funds in foreign countries. Of course this was not, and could not be done to any extent by the less affluent among them; and this will account for what we find to have been the case. They seem to have possessed sufficient capital amid themselves to establish new industries among the nations where they took refuge, whilst at the same time we frequently hear tales of the greatest distress as prevailing among them, which the charity of the people and government under whose protection they have taken shelter is perpetually called upon to relieve — It is easy to understand that those of the French Protestants who possessed funds had immediately embarked them in commercial or manufacturing enterprises, as the best means of assisting the shipwrecked community; but that it was impossible for them, unassisted by those in more prosperous circumstances, to provide for the ruined multitudes who fell upon their hands.

Altogether, however, the state of the French colony in Spital Fields must have been prosperous. We read of six churches established to minister to the spiritual needs of the flock. Needs which they had been taught to consider as the most urgent in human existence. The bread of life — the true bread for which their soul hungered, must be supplied, let what would be wanting.

This was the essential thing. To seek it their forefathers had assembled at the risk of their lives in woods and amid savage rocks; to administer it, their pastors had, in the last tremendous years that preceded the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, defied the gallows, the scaffold, the wheel. Nor did these exiles degenerate from the spirit of their forefathers. They were made of the same sterling stuff —

So we hear of six churches as established from the first in the French colony of Spital Fields.

Those churches have now dwindled to two. The French Hugonot population has gradually merged into that of the country to which they now belong. Many have translated their very names into English equivalents — numbers have conformed to the church of England. The most part seem scarcely to have retained a tradition of the noble and pathetic story of a century and a half ago. The more the pity — it was a tale never to be forgotten. A few, however, retain their names, their genealogies, their family records and papers, as is testified by the publication, only yesterday, of the letters of Chamier, as preserved by his descendants in England.

What the situation of the colony was during the first sixty or seventy years after its establishment, it is difficult to trace. The history of trades and manufactures at that time seems to have excited little interest. People appear to have thought battles and sieges, and successions and political parties, interspersed with a little scandal

about the love-doings of the great ones of the world — the only subjects that would not disgrace “the dignity of history.” The goings on of the swarming multitudes — the busy working bees — the labouring thousands of the body politic, were not supposed worthy even of a thought.

We have volumes upon volumes of court scandal, political intrigues, of the proceedings of ministers, corrupt and corrupting; fine ladies, very questionable kings, not very amiable princesses and queens; but of the Spital Fields weavers — not a syllable. As to the effects produced by this importation and settlement upon the wealth and industry of England and France, a few brief notices are all that is to be found, and those merely when the subject seems actually forced upon the historian.

Even in the pages of Rapin, a refugee himself, scarcely anything upon the subject is recorded; his continuator Tindal is equally silent; Hume and Smollett lie open to the same reproach. We must wait for an historian like Macaulay, to learn — what, their peculiar religious opinions and strict moral code, what their long habits of resistance against persecution, of self-defence against oppression, of self-dependence and persevering industry had made of this people; and to trace the advancement or the progressive decline of their community, under the new influences to which they were exposed.

That it was, upon the whole, a decline, appears to be

too certain. Many still living can remember seasons of great distress among the Spital Fields weavers, as recurring from time to time amid the struggles and difficulties of the early part of the century. The distress having its rise from causes that never were clearly traced or ascertained, and in spite of a protection to their trade, which to us of the present day seems as ludicrous as it is almost incredible. Whether these kind of periodical spasms in their trade, which occasioned such deep misery, were conditional to its system, or the result of these well-intended laws for their protection; whether they occurred at the beginning of the last century as commonly as at its close, I am ignorant.

This night of which I speak was at the latter end of the last century, when the winters seem to have been more severe than they are now, as well as the pressure of external circumstances upon society.

The poverty of the poor, the privations of the middle, the mingled extravagance and difficulties of the higher classes, in those dark, struggling, mistaken, confused, yet energetic and glorious times, would scarcely be believed by the easy, luxurious, comfortable, well-instructed, enlightened, but yet perhaps somewhat superficial race of the present day.

We want great men, is the general cry: perhaps great men, like robust children, must be brought up, not in luxurious nurseries and perfectly-appointed school-rooms,

but under the influences of brave March winds and boisterous skies.

But to my story.

Such a night!

The snow lies heavy upon the whitened, black roofs; and the inky gutters which run down upon each side of the paved, not flagged foot-way, are frozen over. The wind howls low and mournfully around the chimneys and between the high-peaked roofs of these slender houses of three stories, which look, as now seen from the railroad, almost like baby houses; the upper floor of most of them being distinguished by the long undivided window stretching the full length of the dwelling, and lighting the apartment where the silk-weaver is, or desires to be, at work.

Alas! most of the looms were silent at that time.

A court mourning — court mournings were long, tedious things in those days — has added its stagnating effect to the general embarrassment of trade; a fearful winter and a deficient harvest have done the rest. The state of things in Spital Fields is dreadful.

In this little narrow street in which I stood, looking sadly up and down it, scarcely a light was to be seen glimmering through the nicks in the closed shutters, all was dark, dismal, silent — yet it was only eight o'clock at night, and there is no curfew now. Not a sound was there but the moaning voice of the wind, except that now and then I heard, or fancied that I heard, a wail, a low voice of lamentation

here and there — but perhaps I was mistaken. In general, the patience of these sufferers has equalled their miseries, though there have been instances, no doubt, when hunger and despair had driven them into fierce outbreaks.

I had been sent by a benevolent lady whose name I need not mention, upon an errand of mercy to a poor weaver of the name of Cornelly, whose wife was, it was said, dying of consumption. I carried a little tea and arrowroot in my pocket and a little money, which was still better, perhaps. It was all very well — but what was it?

The good lady lived in purple and fine linen, kept a most delicate table, and opened her house to the *bas bleus*, philosophers, and philanthropists of those days. But, in spite of the company she kept, it is but justice to say that her heart remained simple and true, and she helped the poor much more than, according to the fashion of the time, she declaimed about them. How she became acquainted with Cornelly I do not exactly know, nor does it matter; she knew he was in grievous distress, so she sent me to him. Ah me! his was no solitary case!

I had not the exact address, and I had relied upon learning it at some shop or other in the neighbourhood; but there seemed to be no shops hereabouts — at least, if there were, they had been shut up early, as if it were for want of custom.

I knocked at several doors in succession. Sometimes

it would be a man, sometimes a woman, sometimes a child that came to open it; but never shall I forget the haggard misery impressed upon all. Famine was written in their looks — ghoul-hunger in their bloodshot, staring eyes. Among the men, a certain wolfish expression of savage misery; in the women, one of uncomplaining despair; in the children, a sharp, hungry, expectant sort of look, as if they hoped some one was coming to bring them bread. Poor little things! how my heart bled as I turned away and the door shut after me. The few shillings I had in my pocket — I never was master of many at one time — had soon been spent; there was nothing left with which to atone for the momentary disappointment I had inflicted.

One room which I happened to enter by mistake, I shall never forget. It was up one pair of narrow, winding stairs, a small room in which a widow woman and her son, a boy, lived. "The silent loom" stood against the window, and between it and the fire-place obstructing a good deal of the light. It had been silent two months, and she expected it would remain silent two more. Her face was haggard with hunger; she had not, I believe, tasted bread that day. Her dress was squalid in the extreme; her thick black hair turned up from her face, but without a cap, and nothing could equal the misery of the room, or indeed the dirt and squalor of the staircase which led to it. It was plain the landlord of this wretched lodging, though exacting a rent of

above five pounds a-year for this one room, had not for an unknown length of time done anything in the way of cleansing or repairing it. A few old chairs and an old table, two or three very antiquated, time-smeared prints, in black frames, against the walls, telling of once better days, and a large rather handsome press-bed, now dilapidated, were the only furniture. The bed was let down; it seemed so broken that I doubt whether it could be put up. There was neither sheet, blanket, counterpane, nor covering of any kind upon it; all gone to the pawnbroker's to procure a morsel of bread! One little article of pride first, then of comfort, then of necessity had followed — all gone the same way. I apologized for my mistake, slipped my little alms into the woman's hand, and turned away heart-broken. The account I received of her upon inquiry was, that far from wishing to beg or depend upon others, she concealed her poverty even from my informant, who was in the habit of visiting her to give spiritual comfort. He was too poor himself to offer more than a mite to any one individual of this famishing multitude. The woman never complained, but he had reason to feel sure that she had eaten nothing that day. He said she was a pious, godly woman, and respectable in all her habits. I spoke of the dirtiness of her person and room. "Alas!" said he, "in such distresses; they have not the heart, if they had the means to be cleaner, which they have not." This is what we mean by abject misery.

But I weary you with my o'er true tale — if rightly placed, belonging to *October, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-five*.

* * * *

At last I found Cornelly's door.

It was opened by a tall, thin, ghastly-looking man, literally almost skin and bone. Once it appeared that he might have been handsome, and he had a courtesy of manner in which still lingered something of the old French way.

"I believe your name is Cornelly?"

"Yes, sir; that is my name."

"Mrs. Cornelly is very ill, I fear."

"My wife, sir, if you mean? It has pleased God to visit her heavily."

"Consumption?"

"So they tell me."

"You are the person I was in search of. Mrs. G. V., a friend of mine, whose name I think is not unknown to you, has desired me to call."

"The night is very cold, sir," shivering as if the sharp wind entered the very marrow of his scarcely-covered bones. "Will you not please to come in?" opening the door a little wider.

"Thank you. We will not keep the door open; it is very cold."

My nose was blue, my hands quite numbed. I could

scarcely keep my teeth from chattering. I longed to come to the fire and warm myself.

But there was no fire.

The room was spacious enough, and furnished according to the fashion which still obtains in France. A large and somewhat handsome fourpost bed, with red and white curtains, of a thick sort of calico, common to those days, covered with a representation of forest scenery, with trees, wild plants, wild boars, and wild hunters, stood in the farther corner of it. Around the room were one or two handsome and very antique chairs of carved oak, very heavy, and very uncomfortable to sit upon. They would have been the rapture of the present day — but such things were not to the taste of those times. A curious-looking old chest, very large and very heavy, stood against one of the walls, a walnut sloping desk or secretary, with drawers beneath, elaborately ornamented with brass handles and shields, was opposite to it, all of no value then. The very pawnbroker would not lumber his shop with them. The floor was bare, and had once been highly polished, but it was now stained and dirty; and the large, open fire-place stood, with an exception I shall notice by and by, empty and cold this dreadful night.

All the little ornaments which had once adorned the mantel-piece — the quaint brass candlesticks, the handsome sea-shells, the old wooden and ivory specimens of carving-work in figures of men and animals, relics of an-

cient French industry — had disappeared. A single candlestick containing a farthing rushlight, stood upon the mantel-piece, and threw so faint and flickering a light round the room, that it was difficult to distinguish objects close to it. And as for the remoter corners of the chamber, they lay in impenetrable darkness. A cough — the dreadful, racking, agonizing cough of consumption — was heard from the bed. Cornelly hastened to lift up the sufferer, signing to me to keep still.

This gave me the opportunity to examine the room and its contents, and likewise its inhabitants, for the man and his wife were not alone.

By the imperfect light I could distinguish the dark figure of a man of middle age, seated at a table at no great distance from the bed, and that of a youth just entering into manhood, kneeling before the fire-place, endeavouring to light a small heap of wood upon the hearth, by means of a match he held in his hand; but the wood seemed damp, and as if it would not burn. He looked towards the gentleman at the table — for a gentleman it was — as much as to say, “What is to be done?”

His father — for it was his father — shrugged his shoulders and shook his head, in a sort of pitying despair. Then he rose from his seat, and carried a glass in which was the potion he had been preparing, to the side of the bed. He administered the medicine to the sick woman; his son, who had risen from the hearth, assist-

ing to raise her. After she had taken it, the cough abated, and she seemed relieved; and sank into a slumber, rather the result of exhaustion than of anything else. The two gentlemen remained standing by the side of the bed, watching her, and I had time to observe them by the light of the rushlight, which, in their present position, fell full upon their features.

The elder of the two was a man rather above than below the common size, well, not to say exactly, dressed, and with that distinguished air which shows that such habits were a second nature with him; for there was a serious, not to say melancholy earnestness in his countenance and manner, which spoke of one not likely to trouble himself much with the "wherewith he should be clothed." His figure was nervous and well made, with a slightly military air about it; his features high and handsome; his hair a sable silvered; his eye large, grave, thoughtful, yet tender — the eye of one who had thought and felt deeply.

The youth who stood by him was of a slenderer make — his figure slight, his face delicate, but both of remarkable beauty; that tender and graceful beauty, which the antique figures represent in so lovely a manner. But what added greatly to the interest of his charming countenance, was a something of force, of passion, of genius expressed in it, even though the features now were fixed in quiet attention upon the scene before him.

Most of all, however, was this remarkable cast of countenance observable, when he glanced up at his father; and the reverence, the passionate admiration that was written in that look, betrayed an intense sensibility of nature. The father, however, did not seem to see this; he was thinking of other things.

For a few minutes he seemed lost in the most painful rumination; then he sighed and turned away from the bed.

"You must have fire this dreadful night," he said, turning to Cornelly. "How came you to be without it? — Nay," correcting himself, "I know how you came to be without it — but why did you not send to me?"

"Your lordship has done so much — and there are so many." A slightly sarcastic smile passed over the gentleman's face when addressed by this title.

"Nay, Cornelly, no lordships here. I am a poor silk weaver like the rest of you; but as long as I have two loaves and you but one — why —"

"I know it — I know it: but how long will the Seigneur du Chastel have two loaves?" was Cornelly's reply.

"So long as God pleases, and not a day longer, my good friend. But at present it is not a matter of bread, but of fire, which in this weather is almost more needful than bread. Say, where is the nearest place one can get wood and coal?"

"There is a coal-seller in the court at the back of

the house," said Cornelly, "if he has any provision by him — but I doubt it; the small vendors, like the small purchasers, are mostly in the same case."

I now stepped forward.

"I am sent by an excellent lady, Mrs. G. V.," I said, "to examine into your most pressing wants, and supply them. The night is bitterly cold, and you are but thinly clad. If you will direct me to the place, I will myself go to the coal-man's, and send in what you may want. With the remainder of the money I have in charge — shall I order meat or bread?"

"You are very kind, sir. But do not let me give you trouble."

"Perhaps you would better like to have the money at once?" said I.

"Not that — and yet..." and his eyes glanced almost ravenously, if I may use the expression, at the few shillings I had in my hand — I saw that money was more to him than food or fire.

"Is it so?" I said, looking significantly at him.

"It is."

"But," put in Mr. du Chastel, "your wife is perishing with cold and hunger."

"Better die here, than upon the stones of the street."

"How?"

"My landlord, sir — he is impatient — he is not cruel," he added, gently, "he is very poor; poverty

makes a man raven like a wolf, unless the grace of God prevent him. It is not so much that I fear him — perhaps my prayers and my wife's tears might prevail — but I know he is in want, and what is he to do? — All are in the same case — he gets nothing from any of us. It is a sore temptation, his children are crying for bread and fire, like the rest. He thinks, perhaps, if he turns a wretched family into the street, somehow or other somebody will make up the rent. This which I hold in my hand," shewing the shillings which I had given him, "will provide him for the present. It is his — I owe it him. I have no right to what is not mine. Thank you, sir — thank you; and may God's blessing reward that excellent lady, for she has done a deed that is twice blessed this night."

"Cornelly," said Mr. du Chastel, with some severity, "why has all this been hidden from me?"

"Because you shall not, for you cannot — pay the rents of the whole street; and why me more than the rest?" was Cornelly's reply. "No, Monseigneur, I will not be the accursed one to dry up the spring which keeps so many wretches from perishing!"

"You might, at least, suppose me sufficiently acquainted with my own affairs, to be the best judge of what I ought and ought not to do, and trust to my prudence and discretion not to dry up the sources of that spring, as you call it, from which, perhaps, some little refreshment has flowed. You should have come

to me, Cornelly; I would have told you frankly whether I could or could not help you."

"Would you then? — I know better," muttered Cornelly.

"However," Mr. Du Chastel went on, "as this difficulty is relieved through the charity of this worthy lady — through the mercy of God, which never forsakes us, ministered by her hand, I should more rightly say — there remains my little mite to be expended in coal and meat — for we must have a fire, and a bit of meat to make your poor wife a drop of broth, and a hunch of bread for you, my poor fellow! for I believe you are literally famishing."

The gaunt features, the sharp, hungry eyes of the man, when the mention of food roused the animal within the human creature, were shocking.

"Armand," said Mr. Du Chastel, turning to his son, "step to the coal dealer's, and bring a box of coals — here is a tin coal-box. If it had been of wood, it would not have been there. Get it filled, and a few morsels of dry bread, and let me see a good fire against I return with a bit of meat. I am a capital market man," he went on, turning to me; "and it requires all the ability a man can muster, to deal with your knowing butchers at such a time as this, and get one's pennyworth for one's penny. An art the poor man understands as ill as he does most things not connected with his particular calling."

"May I go with you, and take a lesson?"

"Much pleasure in giving one. It is a matter upon which I pique myself — this buying meat and such things," he said, as the door closed after us, and wrapping ourselves in our cloaks, we breasted a cutting wind, which drove sleet and snow into our faces.

"What a night!" I said — "and what a scene!"

He shook his head.

"Ah, sir! could the satirist's tale be realized, and the eye penetrate through these miserable walls, and beneath these miserable roofs, scarcely sufficing to shelter the wretched inhabitants from the cold — but quite sufficient to screen their calamity from the eye of pity — what heart-rending pictures would be disclosed! — Scenes, indeed! Scenes, 'such as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.' Could this but be done — this great, affluent, luxury-loving city would be awakened with a cry of horror. Man is hard, selfish, covetous — but man is not a fiend. No, God has given a heart of flesh to all. It is because he does not see — because he does not know — because he is not careful to see — is not solicitous to know — that these dreadful contrasts prevail wherever human beings are brought together in large masses. Under no circumstances is misery so hidden from view, as in the narrow streets of a vast metropolis like this — more especially in a quarter like this — this Spital Fields —

inhabited by aliens, by strangers, or the children of aliens and strangers — with their own peculiar industry, their own peculiar modes of life, habits, and ideas. Who comes to visit them? Who enquires after them? No one — and why should they? Ought not their own people to provide for their own people? What has England to do with French refugees? She gave them shelter — nay, more; in the hours of their first need, she gave them her alms. Now, she leaves them to themselves. Nay, not even that — her purse is still open to the cry of their great want; but what can that do? A drop on the ocean! or rather the efforts of a child to fill a vessel that is leaky. Where is the leak? What causes these paroxysms of intense distress in our community? That is the question. It was not so with our fore-fathers — they were wise, industrious, prudent, and under circumstances the most adverse. Why can we do so no more? Is it that the spirit of our fathers has departed from among us, and that God has deserted us because we have first departed from him?"

"To discover the cause of this often-recurring period of distress among the Spital Fields weavers has puzzled the wisest heads," I answered. "They are protected by all the means a government can employ — never was industry fostered as theirs has been; and yet the result is most disheartening."

"They deal in articles of fashion and luxury, for one thing — their trade is as capricious as the caprices

of mankind. The muslins of Manchester are starving us; and it might be well if Manchester amid all her prosperity, were not still more miserable than we are."

"How so? — what do you mean to imply, sir?"

"I speak from hearsay only — We are arrived."

It was a miserable little shop, filled, or rather not filled — for there was little in it — with most inferior meat — meat one would hardly have given to a favourite dog; but times were hard then, prices excessively high, and the poorer people in general, most wretchedly provided in the matters of provision.

Mr. du Chastel entered the shop, lighted by a thin dip candle — for gas was not —

The girl in the shop no sooner recognized him, than she hurried to the room behind, exclaiming, but in a subdued voice,

"Father! Father! there's Mr. du Chastel."

The butcher hastened in, bowing with every appearance of the deepest respect. He seemed proud and ashamed at once, to see Mr. Du Chastel in his wretched little shop.

"You would be pleased to want something, Monseigneur?"

"Is this the best meat you have?"

"The best we have left — we have sold the most part — Monseigneur, times are hard."

"I know it; but is this meat fit to be given to Christian men?"

"It is the best my customers can afford to buy."

"The best you find it for your interest to provide for starving men without money or credit — I understand. Is there no other butcher's shop near?"

"Yes, sir — two doors off."

"And his? — Is no better?"

"Only go and look, sir, if you please. Satisfy yourself. Indeed the fault is not ours — we buy the best we can afford; but every one must live, and what are we to do?"

"Too true — give me three pounds of the best you have. It is to make broth for a poor starving soul — there, from this" — pointing to a joint that looked somewhat less dreadfully bad than the rest.

The butcher obeyed him with the most obsequious alacrity — I should have said — if his customer had been a rich man giving a large order; but there was so little to be got by M. Du Chastel, that I could not help attributing this extreme respect to a better cause than self-interest — to the influence that this evidently very superior man exercised in the society to which he belonged.

"Where may I carry the meat to, Monseigneur?" asked Mr. Noir, the butcher.

"Nowhere: you have done your day's work, and were at supper with your family. I will take it — give the meat to me; I am going again to Cornelly's, and will carry it with me."

"Is it for Cornelly?"

"For his wife."

"Then, Monseigneur, excuse me the liberty — but there 's a little sweet-bread here, just hot and hot. We were going to have it for supper — perhaps poor Mrs. Cornelly might fancy it. If you 'd please to wait a moment, just till I put on my great coat, I 'd carry it there with the greatest pleasure. Poor fellow! he 's struggled hard, has Cornelly — these are awful times."

"Give me the sweet-bread, and don't trouble yourself about the carrying it — I'll carry it to the poor woman with the greatest pleasure. You seem a right good-hearted fellow, butcher," said Mr. Du Chastel, cheerfully; and his whole face brightened up with approbation.

"This is comfortable," he said, turning to me.

"You, sir, carry it! — as if I would let *you* do such a thing!" said Mr. Noir.

"Oh! friend, I have borne heavier burdens than that, in my day," said Du Chastel, with a laugh; "the only danger is, that I shall eat your sweet-bread by the road; but, *foi d'honneur*, it shall get safe to its destination. There's for your meat," — offering money.

The butcher gazed at him wistfully. Such love, such admiration, such devotion, it was strange that his red face and vulgar features could express; — but they did. He hesitated.

"Monseigneur — Sir — Mr. Du Chastel — it's little

I can do — Excuse my liberty — they say you do too much — greatly too much. It's but a few pence — a mere mite — but you must excuse me — I won't be paid for the meat, sir."

"Right," said Mr. Du Chastel; "right in you, and right in me. At this rate I shall go far," smiling. "My good fellow! you will be the first of us to stop, it seems."

"No, sir, I shan't hurt myself — I am not one of that sort — I take too much care of number one. Never fear for me, it's not many men in this world that's like Mr. Du Chastel."

"Not many men in this world," he replied, cheerfully, "whose neighbours are so busy interesting themselves in his affairs."

"That's true, sir," said the butcher, "not many indeed; but you won't be angry?"

"Angry! that *would* be a good joke."

And so saying, with a look at the butcher which evidently made the good fellow's heart dance, as if he had received the cordon of the Legion of Honour — which did not, in fact, exist at that time — he turned to leave the shop, I following.

I was struck with this fear again expressed, lest Mr. Du Chastel should ruin himself. I confess, in the frugal way in which he set about dispensing his liberalities, there seemed no very imminent danger of it.

When we returned to the house, the aspect of things

was changed, as they are by the magic of a blazing fire. Cornelly and young Du Chastel were sitting upon each side of the hearth, enjoying the cheerful brightness, and stretching out their pale hands before it. The half-famished man seemed almost as much invigorated by the warmth as he would have been by a good meal.

On our way home we had stopped at a little green-grocer's stall and purchased a pennyworth of roots and pot-herbs, and had there begged the loan of a little salt, for most of the shops were shut; and at a baker's we bought a loaf of bread, which I insisted upon carrying home.

No sooner was the door opened than young Du Chastel rose and hastened towards us, to take the little bundle from his father. A saucepan with water was already upon the fire; with the handiness of an experienced cook the young gentleman washed the meat, cut it in small pieces, put it to boil, washed and prepared the vegetables, cut them into bits, bound up the sweet herbs into what they call a *bouquet garni*, all with a neatness and dexterity which told more than even his name, what blood it was that flowed in his veins; and to my eyes afforded almost a laughable contrast to the extreme elegance of his appearance, and the peculiar delicacy of hands white as those of a princess, and modelled like those of an Antinous or an Apollo.

CHAPTER II.

"The heavenly faith of affection! to hope, to forgive, and to suffer.
God more than all things earthly, and every man as a brother."

LONGFELLOW.

WHEN we opened the door to leave Cornelly's house, such a *bourasque* of sleet and snow, driven by a furious and cutting wind, met us, that we were almost blinded.

Mr. Du Chastel breasted the tempest like one used to storms, physical and moral — inured to meet hardships of every description without flinching; but the delicate form of his son appeared incapable of standing the blast; and as for myself, I really felt as if I should lose my breath, and was half-smothered. I observed Mr. Du Chastel take his son's arm under his own, saying, "Cover your mouth, Armand." He seemed uneasy about the young man, but quite insensible to the tempest himself. As for me, I followed them, not knowing well how I was to get home, for it was now midnight; every shop and every door in this part of the town were closed; there were no lamps in the utterly deserted streets, and not a single hackney-coach was to be seen. Every one seemed to have taken shelter this dismal night, and I had half the town to cross before I should reach my lodgings.

I kept following in the track of the two muffled figures that preceded me, using them as a sort of guide

— for I did not very well know where I was — and their presence as a kind of comfort and protection, till I should come across some old decrepit watchman or other, making his rounds; though the probability was that not one of these helpless guardians of a sleeping city would be stirring at such an hour as this.

Thus we proceeded for some time, threading these narrow lanes rather than streets. At last we arrived at a more open and considerable *place*, for it could hardly be called a square, and was too wide to be called a street. The houses had small gardens before them, but there was no general garden in the centre; the trees in front of the windows, however, though now laden with snow, gave a somewhat pleasant appearance to things; — especially so to me, who abhor streets and love trees. This I could not well distinguish at that time, for the night was very dark; and by the light of the dim oil lamps which hung over each gate of entrance to these garden courts, the black masses powdered over with snow could be dimly seen with a sort of spectral vision of what appeared to be tall, handsome houses beyond them, looming darkly against the winter sky.

At one of these iron gates Mr. Du Chastel and his son stopped, and applying a pass-key, opened it; but before entering, Mr. Du Chastel turned to me. He had not forgotten me in the storm; I had observed him several times turning back to see whether I followed; but to speak was almost impossible, and as useless as

impossible, for it was difficult to articulate, and equally so to hear in the pother.

"Have you far to go?" he asked.

"To C — Street."

"That is quite at the other end of the town — towards Mary-le-bone, I think — two miles — three miles at the very least. The city to-night is like a city of the dead — a mountain among the Cevennes could scarcely be more dreary. If you would accept such shelter as I can offer, it would give me great pleasure. Come in, will you not?"

I hesitated.

"So late at night ... fear to be an inconvenience..."

"Not in the least. There is sure to be a bed at your service; and if not, Armand will give you his."

"With all the pleasure in the world," said the young man. "Pray, sir, accept my father's offer; it is impossible to endure this cold any longer." He looked quite blue with it himself — half dead.

I still hesitated.

"You will not make any ceremony with us, I hope, sir," said Mr. Du Chastel, making way for me to follow his son, who had already hurried through the garden, and was ringing and knocking vigorously at the house-door.

And as he did so, the storm, which had somewhat abated, recommenced with so much fury, that I was fain to accept without further parley, and actually driven before him into the house.

The door was already opened: a very ancient servant stood holding it. Armand had already taken shelter in the hall, which was imperfectly lighted by one pendant lamp.

Mr. Du Chastel and I stood stamping upon the mat, shaking off the snow which had gathered round our feet, and I thought I never felt more comfortable in my life, than when the old servant shut the door and shut out the storm, which was raving and shrieking on the outside.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Du Chastel, cheerfully, "I do not think you have made a bad exchange for once. Ambrose, have you any supper for us?"

"Yes, Monseigneur — yes, Sir; Madame is in the dining-room, and has kept up a noble fire, and supper will be ready in two minutes."

"She is not up!" said Mr. Du Chastel, hastily.

The old man smiled, and shook his head.

"Madame is not used to be on down when others are in the desert," he said.

Mr. Du Chastel, with a brief apology, and consigning me to the care of his son, ran hastily up stairs. The young man and I followed more at leisure, and I had a little time to observe the appearances of things.

The hall — for it was a hall — was lined with carved oak, the beadings and other lines of which had once been gilded. When I say carved oak, it must not be supposed that there was any superfluous or elaborate

flourish of ornament, such as at that date was not uncommon; all was simple and plain, yet handsome and costly to a certain degree. The feeble rays of the one pendant lamp threw a dim and uncertain light upon these wainscotted walls, leaving the remoter corners in deep shadow, and throwing the principal illumination upon a noble flight of shallow stairs, made of chestnut wood, with a rich and heavy balustrade banister of carved oak-work. A very elaborate and very fine piece this was, where the artist had indulged in all that exuberance of fancy in flowers, branches of trees, birds, insects, animals, with a rich abundance and superfluity of ornament, which may be seen in great perfection in many churches in Flanders and elsewhere on the continent, and the vestiges of which still exist in ancient mansion-houses of our own country. It is an art which seems to defy the rules of all art, but pleases, as nature pleases, by a sort of unstudied profusion of creation.

The loud clicking of a very ancient, and it might be almost called grand clock, sounded through the hall, the face of which was adorned with a representation of the sun, moon, and deep blue heavens, all bespangled over with golden stars. It stood at the foot of the stairs, the fingers now marking half-past twelve; before it, a ponderous table of heavy carved wood, upon enormous richly-ornamented legs, was placed between two magnificent carved high-backed chairs, of the most rich and elaborate description; against the opposite wall, a sort of

trophy, consisting of cuirass, back-piece, gloves, steel cap, and, in short, such armour and such arms as were in use in the wars of the sixteenth century, reflected glistening the rays of the lamp; upon each side hung two sheathed swords, both of which, by the rich gilding and ormolu of the hilts, shewed that they had belonged to personages of distinction. Beneath these there was another table, and upon each side very ancient cabinets, or rather wardrobes, of rich marqueterie, were standing, with the doors closed. More of the same carved high-backed chairs, of which I have spoken, completed a furnishing, the details of which faded into obscurity as they receded from the somewhat faint light of the lamp.

This lamp itself was not unworthy of notice. It was of bronze, and in the finest, though the severest style of Italian art. The hall was paved with black and white marble. The stairs, of dark polished wood, had no carpet. There was not, in fact, a single object to give the relief of a brighter colouring to the grave and somewhat gloomy simplicity of the whole.

It appeared to me that Armand purposely delayed and lingered whilst he got rid of his cloak, whilst the old servant was helping me off with my wet great-coat. He carried it to the other end of the hall, as though he would hang it up; yet hesitated, and came back again, and gave it to Ambrose at last, with —

“It must be dried first.” Then he pulled down his sleeves, slightly arranged his hair, all which operations

took up about five minutes, which seemed to me unnecessarily long, then with —

“Now, if you please to follow me, sir,” he mounted the stairs two or three at a time, light as a gazelle, and unclosing a rich and lofty door of gilded oak, which opened into the short gallery terminating the staircase, I was ushered into the apartment within.

It was lofty and handsome, but of the same severe character as the hall; very high, narrow windows were surmounted by dark cornices from which depended curtains of rich silk brocade of a deep sombre purple brown. A noble mantel-piece of equally dark wood surmounted an ample fire-place, where, supported by gilded *chénets*, a huge fire of logs was burning. Opposite to the huge fire-place, where, in gentlemen's houses, we are accustomed to look for a fine mirror, another large cabinet wardrobe or book-case, which you will — for it was all in one — heavily but richly carved and ornamented, extended the whole breadth of the wall. The sides of the apartment were occupied by chairs, settees, and tables, in the state of a century before, all rich, but all plain, and the principal distinction being the magnificent silk brocade with which they were covered.

The room was lighted by four large wax candles, that was all. The only article of luxury to be seen was a large and very wide sofa, with many cushions upon it, which stood at right angles with the chimney-piece, and upon this, what appeared to me, by that bright and

beautiful light of the fire and candles, as something scarcely belonging to this world, lay.

A woman of extraordinary beauty, but pale, with a complexion of that transparent delicacy which looks like the petal of a lily flower, was lying upon the sofa, supported in a half-recumbent posture by cushions and by the arm of Mr. Du Chastel who kneeled upon one knee beside her.

She was dressed in white, without the least colour about her dress, which was only relieved by a plain black scarf, and by the masses of her raven hair drawn simply round her face, and in which threads of silver, ill in accordance with the youthful delicacy and beauty of her appearance, were to be, upon a near approach, discerned. Upon her right arm she wore a large velvet band or bracelet, fastened by a clasp, in which was a miniature; this was her only ornament. She had her hand clasped in that of Mr. Du Chastel, and her eyes — the most beautiful I had ever beheld, literally heavenly eyes, such were the pure light of loveliness, the depths of holy feeling and goodness that were in them — were fixed upon her husband with a sweet half-playful, half-melancholy smile, as she listened to the serious and earnest remonstrances that he seemed to be making.

Mr. Du Chastel rose up as we entered, and saying, "Allow me," brought me up to the sofa, and presented me to his wife.

She held out the fairest, but, alas! the most ema-

ciated of hands, upon which one circlet of small diamonds just guarded the narrow wedding ring, and said —

“I need not say how welcome your company is to us to-night, sir. Your kindness in coming so far to visit our poor people is great. They lie out of the reach of ordinary charity.”

I answered something as little to the purpose as one usually does upon such occasions. Mr. Du Chastel placed a chair near the sofa, and signed to me to sit down.

“You have scolded *me*,” she said, lifting up her soft eyes to him; “now it is my turn. Your coat is quite wet — go and change it. How is yours, sir?”

“My dreadnought has kept me quite dry, I thank you.”

“And Armand — naughty boy! how are you?”

“All right, dear mamma,” said he, coming up and kissing her hand playfully; “but what right has mamma to talk, who sits up till past midnight, when she ought to be in bed at ten?”

“How was it possible to rest, my Armand? Only listen to the storm against the windows, and your father out in it!”

“Oh, I know, I know!” kissing her hand again as he stood at the back of the sofa holding it in his, and looking at her with a something between love and admiration. I now remarked the striking resemblance there was between the mother and son. A beauty in

both, rendered the more peculiar by a sort of enthusiastic brightness, which illuminated, not to say glorified, the features. "But you are naughty — you are naughty — and we are hungry, and want our supper," he went on, breaking off abruptly and dropping her hand, as if in a small degree ashamed of this little scene before a stranger.

"All is ready — do you not see? I have ordered it up here. Draw that table before the fire, and ring for Ambrose; he will give you something to eat in a moment."

The heavy table, with its immense claws of dark carving, was with some little difficulty rolled by Armand, with my assistance, nearer to the fire. He shook up the ashes and arranged the logs till the blaze was magnificent; glittering upon the gilding which sparingly relieved the sombre hue of the furniture, and lighting up the dark polished oak with a thousand miniature reflections.

The table was covered with a snow-white cloth of the very finest damask from the looms of Flanders, but it was sparingly furnished with plate. Two elaborately-carved silver salt-cellars stood upon it, and the three covers which had been laid were each furnished with a most rich, almost to say splendidly-ornamented silver spoon. Three more of these spoons were placed in the centre of the table, forming a sort of star; steel knives and forks with heavy, very antique-looking silver hafts,

and napkins costly from their extraordinary fineness, completed the furnishing of the supper table; at one corner of which stood one of those old things of tray above tray, which our forefathers denominated a dumb-waiter, and upon which half-a-dozen glasses, as many rummers, a bottle of wine not decanted, and a jug of water, stood.

I had time to observe this somewhat singular mixture of magnificence and parsimony, before Mr. Du Chastel returned. The character of the scene excited my interest and curiosity; I, who loved romance so dearly, and who never could stumble upon any, in the most homely and prosaic of cities as London was then; and the most humdrum and uninteresting of periods, as history stood at then! — I was not a little pleased and excited, by falling, in this unexpected manner, upon something so totally unlike anything I had ever met with in my life before.

The elegance, the dignity, the absence of parade — the noble simplicity, bordering upon poverty, that surrounded me — were totally unlike anything I had ever seen, though I was a privileged frequenter of many an aristocratical mansion at the other end of the town.

I had been accustomed to much grave pomp, and a certain severe grandeur in many of the highest of these; but there was a something altogether different here — an air of self-denial, not to say of parsimony, in some of the arrangements, which contrasted in a curious manner

with a magnificence in some respects, that few of the mansions I have alluded to could have rivalled.

But now the door opens, and Mr. Du Chastel re-enters. He had thrown off his wettest suit, and now appeared dressed in black with *jabot* and ruffles, not of rich lace, as generally worn by gentlemen, but of white lawn, perfectly plain. Not the slightest embroidery, or the least edging of point upon them; the silver buckles of his stock and of his shoes, however, showed that he was not in mourning. These ornaments, if ornaments they may be called, were of the simplest description, rendering them remarkable at a time when men were so elaborate in articles of this nature; and when those who had not buckles of diamonds, usually supplied their place by very showy ones of paste, which shone and sparkled to eyes unlearned in such things, nearly as brightly as what they imitated, and set off the rich point ruffles and shirt frill, which almost every gentleman of the least pretension wore, to much advantage. Mr. Du Chastel's hair was arranged also with more simplicity than was usually seen; but be the dress what it might, one thing was not to be mistaken — the high-bred and polished air with which it was worn, and which bespoke the finished French gentleman of that time of day, when high breeding was carried to so much perfection.

The son was a beautiful and distinguished being, but he wanted something of that air which was so re-

markable in his father. He was rather what a well-educated, well-born English youth might have been; and I afterwards found he had been entirely brought up in England. Yet he was, perhaps, as charming in his refined and unaffected simplicity as his father with all his courtly elegance, and most highly-polished plainness.

Mr. Du Chastel came up to me, and very kindly again enquired, whether I had escaped being wetted by the storm. My dress had been altogether shielded by my large cloak, but my nether man, as regarded my shoes, showed plainly enough that I had been plodding through mud and snow.

I had stretched my limbs out, and was drying my feet before the fire.

Mr. Du Chastel apologised for his negligence, in not having provided me with the means of changing this part of my dress.

"The fire in the room preparing for you, will not yet have burned up. Armand," turning to his son, "show our friend....."

"D. V.," I said, giving my name.

"Show Mr. D. V. to my dressing-room, and provide him with what is needful. I am shocked this has been overlooked."

"Oh!" I said, "I really had forgotten it myself. My shoes are pretty stout, but a pair of dry slippers, if Madame Du Chastel will excuse them, will be very acceptable."

"This way, sir," said Armand, rising and opening the door, and at the same time taking the candlestick his father had set down, and which was merely a brass one, such as one still sometimes sees in old houses. I followed him up a fresh flight of stairs, somewhat narrower and steeper than those from the hall, and not lighted by either lamp or candle, so that they were pitch dark, and the little star of the candle Armand carried before me, scarcely did more than suffice to make the darkness visible.

He opened the door of a small apartment, almost entirely lined with book-shelves, scantily lighted by a half-expiring fire; and setting the candle upon a small round table of mahogany, black with age — proceeded to open a wardrobe in one corner of the room; he produced stockings and slippers, of a sort of black cloth, very thick and warm, but quite plain — not the slightest morsel of gimp or embroidery upon them. Indeed, the room, as displayed by the light of the fire, which Armand shook up into a blaze, shewed still more severely than the rest, the absence of the slightest ornament or superfluity. There was no carpet — the floor, it was true, was slightly adorned by a few lines of black wood inlaid upon the polished oak — but that was all. The book-shelves were perfectly plain, there was not even a cornice at top — and far from brightening the aspect of the room by an array of gilded volumes, were mostly

filled with books in plain black bindings, which only added to the sombre appearance of the apartment.

In a recess behind a moreen curtain whose greenness was very nearly approaching to black, the washing-stand and its accompaniments was placed — not the slightest approach to luxury being here visible. A huge jug, of the most ordinary brown ware, held a plentiful supply of water; a smaller one, of the same cheap and rough material, was filled with the drinking water; but by it stood two glasses, rather, I should say, goblets, carved like jewels, and their stems with the well-known milk-white thread which we admire in ancient vessels of this description; the same contrast prevailing here, but in a greater degree than below. A candlestick of the richest, choicest silver, stood upon a large writing-desk of common white wood, placed upon one side of the room, evidently intended for use not shew, and upon which numerous packets of papers were placed. An arm-chair of carved ebony, that Horace Walpole might have raved after, was without a cushion — a tall-backed, uncomfortable chair, such as Cowper has immortalised, was standing opposite to it — but a low wooden bench, and nothing more, was placed near the fire, for the occupation of the master of the apartment; and, indeed, the traces of his having sat there to change his clothes were visible, by sundry things being left about. The clothes he had taken off being heaped upon the larger chair,

after the fashion of a man who has no valet, and is in haste to finish his toilet.

The only things that approached to ornament in this room, were the pictures. A large battle-piece hung over the chimney-piece, and above the book-cases were a good many portraits. They were mostly, however, framed in black frames, and treated in a severe and dark manner, so that they took little or nothing from the gravity, approaching to gloom, of the apartment.

I lifted the candle to examine the picture over the chimney-piece.

"The battle of Jarnac, and the death of Condé," said Armand.

"The great Condé?" I asked.

"No, sir," said he, smiling a little — "it is the battle of Jarnac."

"I am not very strong in French history," I said. "I am ashamed to say I don't just now recollect when that battle took place; and as for the Condés, we in England are not much acquainted with any but the great Condé. Everybody here knows him. But this battle seems to have been an important one, if one may judge by the picture which has been painted to celebrate it. Is it a very ancient picture?"

"Yes, very. The picture tells its own story. It is not, as you will perceive, in the first style of art, yet there is a certain heartiness and simplicity in the way the hurry of a fight is represented, which please me —

but I am, of course, no judge. I probably love the picture, because I have known it from a child. I cannot recollect a time when it was not hanging there."

"The principal group, however, can hardly claim the merit of shewing the hurry of a great battle. A man dressed like a nobleman, with a white *casaque* — I think you call it — is fallen, and a circle of splendidly-dressed men in scarlet *casques* seem gathering round him — pity and horror are well delineated upon some of those faces. There is one fleeing away, as if he were afraid of a dead man."

"It is Maulevrier; he has just discharged his pistol and murdered Condé. That is Condé — he in the white *casaque*. He was leaning against that tree, for his leg had been broken by the kick of a friend's horse, as he entered the battle; insensible to his condition, merely exhorting his followers 'To remember in what state Louis De Bourbon entered the combat — *pour Dieu et pour sa patrie*.' He had surrendered himself a prisoner, when the battle went against us; and he, with his usual impetuosity, plunging into the thickest of the fight, had been surrounded. They had seated him, for he was unable to stand, leaning against that tree. He was chatting with his usual frankness and gaiety with the officers of the Royal army — those in the crimson *casques*, you will observe — *we* always wore white — when Maulevrier, knowing well how best to please the Duke of Anjou, the man he called master, came behind our prince,

and crying '*Tue! tue!*' basely and treacherously shot a defenceless man, confiding in the honour of his enemy! But it is of a piece with the rest," he added, turning away; "few people care to know the old story. It is a monotonous tale — a repetition of the same thing, from first to last."

I continued to gaze at the picture, beginning now to recollect a little of this passage of history, though imperfectly enough — for who knows it, and who cares for it? What are the unsuccessful struggles of a brave religious party, strongly tinctured too with Calvinism, and without bishops, to any one? They struggled and they were overcome, and there was a dreadful massacre on Saint Bartholemew's day; that, at least, everybody knows — not much more.

Seeing I still kept my eyes fixed upon the painting, Armand came up to it again.

"It seems to interest you — but it is not, after all, a good picture. There is one thing, however, that gives it value — the faces are, or profess to be, portraits. That retreating figure is the Admiral; but, perhaps," with a bitter meaning smile, "you do not know, or care to know, our Admiral, from any other admiral."

"Coligny, no doubt."

He seemed pleased with the eagerness with which I stepped forward to examine the figure to which he pointed.

"There is some neglect of historical exactness," he

said. "The Admiral could not very well have been in that place at the time Condé was lying in this. The painter's principal aim seems to have been to introduce as many portraits of the leading characters as possible, without much regard to other things. That is Dandelot retiring with his infantry — But will you give me leave? — Your slippers are warmed now."

"Thank you. I am ashamed to have kept you waiting."

I had soon made my change — he seemed about to leave the room.

"One moment," I said, taking up the candle and glancing at the portraits.

"These seem curious — most of them, not portraits of warriors, however."

"Of martyrs, sir, and confessors."

"That is Rochette, that is Calas, that is Chamier, that is Morel, that is Duplessis Mornay, that is —"

"There are others besides. That is Sully?" I asked.

"Pardon, sir! No Sully here."

"Why? I thought he was one of your most shining characters."

"With the world in general; not among ourselves. Are you comfortable? Shall we go down stairs? Supper will be upon the table, I believe."

"I can hardly bear to leave this most interesting room. I am longing to look into some of the books."

"I do not know that they would interest you much;

but I am sure that my father would have pleasure in giving you the opportunity of looking into any of them. If you love obscure history, or rather history obscure because generally neglected, you would find much here that is curious, I believe. But perhaps it seems to me worth more than it is. I have lived with these books from a child: a boy loves chronicles of dangers and heroism, of suffering and death. It pleases a child, and it pleases men who sympathize with a cause generally little regarded. I do not know whether these registers of imprisonments, tortures, and martyrdoms would interest any but ourselves."

And opening the door for me, and lighting me by the candle he had now taken from my hand, he led the way down-stairs.

CHAPTER III.

"My lands are taken and my castles razed;
My gold and silver have found wings and fled."

MRS. ACTON TINDAL.

MR. DU CHASTEL was alone in the drawing-room when we entered it; the sofa was unoccupied, and the lady gone.

He was sitting by the fire, with the fire-tongs in his hand, as if intending to re-arrange the logs upon the hearth, for they were fast sinking into that state of inanition peculiar to wood fires. But the fire-tongs were

idle in his grasp, and he seemed lost in a fit of deep and painful musing. He started, however, from it as we entered the room, and turned round towards the table.

"No supper yet?" said Armand.

"It waits for you, I suppose," putting his hand upon the bell; then turning to me with a courteous, not to say courtly, smile — "We must not deceive you by these delays into the expectation of anything like gastronomic preparation. It is impossible to exceed the simplicity with which we are accustomed to live."

I said what is usual upon such occasions, and he let the subject drop. Presently the door opened, and Ambrose appeared, carrying in a handsome silver tureen, which he set upon the table. This was speedily followed by a small piece of beef, arranged with vegetables, upon a dish of the most ordinary earthenware; a few Maintenon cutlets, and a dish of lentils with white sauce, all served upon the same cheap material, completed the entertainment. The singular incongruity of which could not escape attention; for, to say nothing of the rich spoons and silver-hafted knives with which the table was laid, the tureen was so large and so highly ornamented, that it might have been called magnificent anywhere. It had a coat of arms with rich work embossed upon one side — a large ladle, silver-gilt, was laid on it.

We sat down; Mr. Du Chastel and his son opposite each other, I on the side next the fire.

"Soup?" asked the master of the house, plunging his splendid ladle into his splendid tureen, and ladling the soup into a common white soup-plate. "Soup is not, I believe, so indispensable a preface to your meals as to ours; but in the present case you will find, I am afraid, that it forms the best part of the supper. Why, Ambrose, could you not even afford us an omelette?"

"Monsieur forgets, he had sent the last eggs to Mrs. Souleau," said Ambrose; "and it was vain to try for more. All the shops are shut — it is past midnight."

"You would rather they were with Mrs. Souleau then, I am sure; but I am sorry there is so little to be had. Ambrose's Maintenon cutlets are, however, celebrated; when we have finished our soup, we must fall back upon them."

And we proceeded to eat our soup.

"Master *will* send everything out of the house," put in Ambrose, as if ashamed of his bill of fare. "*Et que voulez vous* — the people are starving."

Mr. Du Chastel smiled.

"You see," he said, "Ambrose is more ashamed of our *lésinerie* than we are ourselves; but, my good fellow you need fear nothing. This gentleman will be at least as well pleased to know where the contents of your larder are gone, as you were yourself to distribute them; so say no more about it." And turning to me — "You will not mind hard fare for once in your life, Englishman though you be, and given to consider what we

think luxuries as the indispensable necessities of life — for *us*, *this* is luxury.”

“You have served,” I said, “no doubt. A soldier’s life is exposed to great privations at times. It is a good school for that.”

Armand smiled, and shook his head.

“My father has learned in a yet harder school,” he said.

“I should think that there are passages in the military life than which nothing could be harder,” was my reply.

“Do you think so? — What do you say to the galleys?” said Mr. Du Chastel carelessly, holding out his plate for some lentils.

I involuntarily shrank back at the name.

“Don’t be alarmed,” he went on, playfully. “The galley slave is not always a criminal.”

“Oh! it was from no fear of that sort,” said I, colouring all over; “but the name is so dreadful! — so repulsive!”

“Very,” said he.

“If you had known my father to be a forçat, and I the son of a forçat,” put in Armand gaily, “perhaps you would not have been ready to sit down with us. A galley slave! We get thrown at times into strange company!”

Ambrose looked angrily, I thought.

“Too great an honour for a prince to be allowed to

sit down with *him*," he muttered. "What is Master Armand thinking of?"

I held out my plate for some more soup; but he eyed me askance, and would not take it.

"Why, Ambrose," said Mr. du Chastel, "what's the matter? Galley slaves were at no time esteemed the best of company; and since the days when Don Quixote paid so dear for his sympathy with Gines de Passamontes — it has been agreed upon all hands to distrust and avoid them. Perhaps," he added, looking with a smile at me, "you feel as if you had fallen into the hands of brigands, and regard these poor relics of a fallen house," — glancing at his tureen, — "as the reward of some nefarious enterprise, for which I was justly condemned to the chain. Nothing of the sort, give me leave to assure you. I was simply sent to the oar for the crime of listening to a very indifferent sermon, and trying to save the life of the very harmless and somewhat incompetent preacher; that was all, I give you my honour. So pray let Armand provide you with a cutlet, and eat your supper, such as it is, in peace."

I was greatly shocked, and for some moments silent, with that sort of sad surprise with which one finds something realised in actual life, which one had heard and read of, but some way only believed as one believes in history — as one believes in a novel.

Ambrose looked sourer than ever at this; but Mr. du Chastel and his son at once understood me.

“It sounds incredible — does it not? But in France, it has, till very lately, been an every-day tale; — a tale nobody heeds, nobody listens to, nobody troubles themselves about, except those few whose hearts are wrung and tortured to an ecstasy of grief, by the experience of its truth — the fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, wives, of the galley slaves chained, half naked, in the burning sun or pinching frost, to the oar.”

“I have heard of it; and my heart has burned with indignation at the time. But what wretches! what monsters of indifference! what stocks and stones we are! Who cares, indeed? — who eats one morsel the less, or sleeps one degree the less soundly, because of the execrable tyranny and injustice that are perpetrated a few hundred leagues from him? It makes one abhor oneself and human nature —”

“It is human nature, though — and there is an end of it,” replied my host; “and well it is, perhaps, that man realises with so much difficulty, or does not realise at all, the sufferings of those at a distance from him; life would be insupportable otherwise. — See! your supper is untouched — the mere presence of one victim disorders you so much. You could not live if you knew, if you could divine, the truth in its full extent, of what has been — what is!”

“If all men felt as sick with impotent rage as I do at this moment, when an example of tyranny is presented to them, there would be fewer examples of

tyranny. Pardon me, sir, I *in toto* disagree with you. If men realised what other men endured — if this barbarous, this savage indifference were exchanged for a sincere sympathy with suffering which we *know* exists, though we do not witness it — if men would not lay their heads contentedly on their pillows, when execrable wrongs were being done — a voice would be heard — there would be a public opinion — there would be a universal execration which no tyrant upon earth could be bold enough to defy!”

“Men would go mad with rage and horror,” persisted Du Chastel.

“Let them. — Am I not right, Armand?”

The young man’s cheek was flushed, and his eye sparkling.

“Let them, indeed,” he cried. “Sick! mad! anything! — only let this monstrous wickedness be brought to an end. Oh, sir! if you knew it all — My mother.....”

“Nay, Armand,” interrupted his father; “spare *me* now.” Then, turning to where I sat: “It is natural — We feel more for others than we do for ourselves. She can forgive, has forgiven — her son cannot. — Take away the supper, Ambrose, for I see we have all had enough of it; bring wine and biscuits, and make up the fire. It gets cold. We will have a cheering blaze to send us to bed.

“These little luxuries of life — and you see we

cannot afford very much of them — have a charm to me,” he said, as he seated himself in the arm-chair by the hearth — I having positively refused to occupy it — “which, I sometimes think, more than compensates for all I have had to go through. As regards myself, certainly so. It gives a relish to life, which no one but those who have experienced such things can understand. There are compensations most often provided, of which the cruelty of man cannot altogether deprive us. There are cases, however, where, on the contrary, his utmost barbarity of intention falls short of the misery he inflicts. If man could but picture to himself what some agonies amount to, the most iron-hearted of oppressors would shrink from inflicting them; but they don’t know — they don’t know — and who shall tell them? My wife! —”

“Yes — I understand — your sufferings through her! I have heard shocking accounts of what women have been made to endure, and have endured heroically, for conscience-sake; but I hope nothing very terrible befell you in that quarter.”

“It could scarcely be worse,” he replied; and his face took that ashy hue which it sometimes assumes at the mere recollection of intense pain.

I was shocked that I had said even this much.

“Armand,” Mr. du Chastel said, “steal to your mother’s door, and find out, if you can, whether she is asleep; if not, I will come to her. But if she is quiet, I would not be sorry to remain here by the fire a little

longer — I don't feel inclined, just at present, for rest. But do not let me keep *you* up, sir, I beg."

"I would much rather remain here by the fire a little longer, if I was not in his way," I said.

"Far from it," he replied; adding, that the interest he believed I took in the condition of the population about him, made it quite a relief to talk the matter over with me.

"I have not been very long in England," he went on, "and feel myself, in great measure, a stranger here. I have few personal acquaintance; for, during several years, I was as a sort of outlaw from my people. Circumstances had rendered my very name odious. So odious! that nothing my poor uncle could do — whose place in this house I now occupy — had been sufficient to redeem it. My sufferings at last spoke for me, and I have been restored to my standing in the Refuge; but of late years things are so much changed, that it is no longer what it was. The evils of an emigration such as ours are not to be calculated. An act of enormous wickedness and folly carries its consequences not only to the perpetrator, but to the victims. Yet, who knows? Had we continued to prosper as we were prospering, when this desolation fell upon us, what we might have become? Our wealth might have undone us. Who knows? God — and he only. What I see about me here is discouraging; our very industry and ingenuity are become a snare. Mammon is usurping what belonged

to God. Our churches are falling to decay; our well-ordered and well-conducted working classes sinking gradually into the vices common to others of their calling. The Spital Fields weaver will soon, almost is now, become no better than the rest who are crowded together by great industries in great cities; — improvident, intemperate, insubordinate, and ungodly! No longer distinguished by those qualities which once adorned the French Protestant, the despised Hugonot, the present distress of these wretched beings that surround us is too much to be attributed to their own fault — their habits are become terribly demoralized. Would this have been so, had they remained linked together in the peaceful society of their churches? Not to the same extent, I must believe. Why are such evils permitted? Awful question! Mystery of iniquity! impenetrable mystery!”

“It had astonished me,” I said, when reflecting upon the subject, which, I confessed, very rarely had been the case, “that the monstrous iniquity in the conduct of the French monarch and government towards this portion of their subjects had not excited a more universal and vehement burst of indignation throughout the whole of Protestant Europe. That the gigantic wrong, the audacious defiance of all good faith and honour, of every law that binds individuals to individuals, communities to communities, and gives the slightest security, or basis, to human society, had not been met with an abhorrence too

universal for perseverance in such a course to be possible. It seems to me," I continued, "that the inviolable maintenance of these common, ordinary — I might almost say brute — laws of good faith, is so necessary to the very existence of society, that the mere selfish sense of his own interest ought to rouse every individual man to exert himself for their protection; — to support them by his voice, his writings, nay, by his arms, if needful! Common justice, common respect for pledges and promises is everybody's affair."

"Or, nobody's," said Du Chastel, with a sort of smile. "But to return to what more immediately concerns us — the state of the people around here. Trade is in a fearful state, and appearances threaten us with a worse. The demand for silks is, I understand, diminishing every day. That capricious divinity — Fashion, upon whom, unfortunately, our trade almost entirely depends, is forsaking us, I am told. The muslins of Manchester are rapidly superseding the brocades of Spital Fields, and Coventry is rivalling us in ribands. These things will arrange themselves in time, no doubt — at least so your new science of political economy, I think you call it, assures us; but what is to be done until they have? The prices of provisions, too, are rising rapidly."

"One feels ashamed to be plentifully fed as we have been, or might have been, this night, when one's fellow-creatures are starving," said I.

"So I feel it, and think our supper had a taste of

that sentiment," he replied, quietly — "Armand, your mother is asleep?"

"Fast and sweetly," said Armand, and took his place by me at the fire.

"Can the government do anything for us, think you?" proceeded Mr. Du Chastel.

"What can government do for trade? Protect it? Yours is already protected in every way that the invention of man can devise."

"There is nothing more to be done in that line."

"It would be rather too late in the day to issue sumptuary laws, and insist upon every one wearing very expensive silks, instead of rather inexpensive muslins; besides, what has Manchester done? — And Arkwright?"

"There it lies too. This hand-weaving against machinery! It must go!" he said with a sigh. "Sooner or later, down it must come, I see. There is nothing left but to break the fall as well as we can. Armand, we must give up Italy."

"Be it so," was all Armand answered; but he rose suddenly from his chair and left the room.

"How wide-spreading are evils such as these!" remarked his father. "Yet, what are personal disappointments of this nature in times of misery so extreme? And perhaps ... yet, I can never believe the gifts of God were intended to be buried in a napkin ... and yet ... what business has genius among *us*? Genius for the fine arts, in a community which not only does not ap-

preciate art, but almost condemns it. Distrusting art, as something leading to a deviation from the one grand purpose for which man was created. That boy," — he still went on, for he seemed in the humour to be communicative; something about me perhaps, the hour, the time, inclined him to it — "That boy unquestionably has, I cannot disguise it from myself, genius; and as it appears to me, of the highest order. Alas! how misplaced at such a period, and in such a society as ours. *Our* imaginations are yet filled with past horrors — prisons, galleys, executions, tortures; or else they are occupied in the pursuits of an industry which is fast becoming sordid. What has a child of genius to do among *us*? Yet, the attempt to stifle it were to commit a crime worse than child-murder."

"A genius for poetry? — for eloquence?"

"I wish it were. *That* would find its vocation among us. Such men we greatly need. . . . Yet the great masters of the imitative arts have been eloquent — have been poets; but it was but a secondary object in their lives. No, sir, the boy's genius lies in the arts of design. And," looking round the room "you may guess," with a dry laugh, "what encouragement there is for such in *our* houses."

"But," I said, "there is a greater obstacle in my opinion, than that. In England the social position of an artist is not what it ought to be. Your son would certainly find himself out of place as one, by profession;

and of what value are *amateur* artists? what scope for genius is there among such?"

"That observation I have made, and it partly consoles me. Not that Armand's circumstances are ever likely to be such as to entail upon him the necessity of pursuing art for a maintenance. But your remark is just. Art which is not followed under the serious obligation of supplying a man with his bread, rarely reaches to any perfection. It is not, it cannot be, pursued with that unflinching perseverance which every important success demands, be it in what line it will. Poetry alone perhaps may be excepted. Yet the finest poets have been stimulated by the grand necessity imposed upon man at the Fall, his blessing and security, as much as his curse. It is quite true, a mere amateur artist is rarely more — I believe — than a mere amateur artist. But the passion, for indeed it merits the name, with which my son pursues his art, the invincible perseverance with which he contends against almost insurmountable obstacles, deserves a better fate than to sink into mediocrity. I little speak the sentiments of my people in expressing myself thus. I have told you the small account they set by such things. Nay, that the majority hold them in worse than contempt — in fear and abhorrence, as ministering, in spite of all their graces and beauties, to the worst moral evils."

"I have understood, that a certain narrowness of sentiment — if you will excuse the expression — upon

subjects of this nature distinguishes the French, as well at the Swiss reformed churches; inspired, no doubt, by the dark, rigid nature of their great founder's character."

"His character has, perhaps, been misunderstood, like many other characters and circumstances belonging to the ill-fated story of the French reformation. No doubt, it is one of the smaller evils of persecution compared with its terrors, struggles, and agonies — but still an evil — that it tends to stifle in the bud the germs of the softer enjoyments. Men who are contending for all they hold dear, not only in this life, but in the next — whose hopes and aspirations are fixed upon that better life between which and them a scene of death and horror lies. Men, taking up the cross daily, agonizing for their wives, their children, their consciences. They" — stopping himself, for like the impetuous rushing of a torrent, the floodgates once opened, his words seemed streaming from him. "They, have little inclination to indulge in the imaginative, when horror in all its terrific reality is close upon them on every side."

"But now, at least — here, at least — every one is at peace; and there is no reason why what adorns and refines life, should not be cultivated."

"So I think. Though even I hesitate upon the subject; for who shall say what evils — what vices — what gradually relaxing and corrupting influences, may be introduced under that specious name? Yet I incline to your opinion, and, wrong or right, have gone so far as

to encourage my son in his passionate desire to visit Italy, and cultivate his art, where alone it is perfectly to be cultivated. To aim at a true perfection in whatever we undertake, I have said to myself, is laudable. Base is it in any matter to be content to do well by halves. Yet, possibly, I may be acting under a false view of the relative value of things myself — and certain it is, there are many around me who think so.”

“I doubt it not; the majority are mostly incapable of enlarged views. And those who have a more confined horizon, usually see the objects presented to their minds with a distinctness and individuality which encourages their obstinacy, and inclines them to indulge in a very irrational contempt for those who look farther, but whose wide-extended landscape is frequently rendered somewhat indistinct through multiplicity of objects, and the distance at which they stand.”

There was the silence of a few seconds.

Then Mr. Du Chastel said, half as if speaking to himself:

“True — and especially true of women?”

“Especially so, of the majority of women. Their views are necessarily more confined than ours, and what they do see, it is with so much passion that they look upon it, that — but I lose myself in an absurd attempt at expressing my thoughts very confusedly by metaphors; briefly, I think women who reflect and observe at all, are more absolute in their views than men — as children

are than grown persons. They take fewer circumstances into consideration; circumstances which, if allowed their due weight, would greatly modify the judgment, perhaps — and they always mingle a certain dose of feeling with their conclusions, which is an ingredient the most illogical, but at the same time the most positive in the world.”

Silence again; and Mr. Du Chastel fell into a fit of musing, which lasted some time; then, as if suddenly awakened from his reverie, he started up, and said:

“I beg your pardon — it grows late, and you must be fatigued. Shall I shew you the way to your room? You must excuse two pair of stairs,” he added, as he lighted the candle; “the floor above is entirely occupied with my wife’s apartments, if I may include my own dressing-room in that category.”

The house was still — every one seemed to have retired to rest. Mr. Du Chastel led me up the steep staircase which conducted to the attic, and opening the first door upon the landing, ushered me into a small apartment, neatly furnished, but with extreme simplicity. The fire was low, and almost extinguished, but the room felt warm and comfortable; and the roaring of the storm which still continued without, seemed excluded by the heavy curtains of dark green which hung over the one window.

We parted for the night, and I heard Mr. Du Chastel descend the stairs; after which there would have been unbroken silence, save, that as I stood musing be-

fore the fire-place, my candle still in my hand, I could hear the footsteps of some person yet up, and who seemed pacing to and fro in the next room.

After standing a short time looking round at the different objects in the room, and listening to the blasts of wind that roared and rushed about the house, I was intending to set down my candle, and proceed to undress, when stupidly missing the place, I let it fall, and it was extinguished against the floor. The fire was so low that I found myself nearly in darkness.

First I tried to coax the fire; but it was of wood, and a few sparks and a shower of white ashes, were all I could get out of it. Next, I tried to light my candle; but it was obstinate, and would not be lighted. To go to bed in the dark, in a place so new to me, was not agreeable. I still heard the footsteps pacing in the next chamber; and thinking it was probably one of the servants, who was still up, I took courage, and groping my way to the door, knocked, and asked whether the inmate would be so good as to light my candle for me.

The door opened immediately; but it was not a servant, it was Armand that appeared.

"I beg your pardon," said I; "I have stupidly put out my candle, and I should be glad to light it again."

"Come in, pray," said he: "*my* candle is also out; but I have matches, and the fire is still alive, I will light yours for you immediately."

I entered the low but large apartment — large at

least, in comparison to mine. Armand broke up his fire, which blazed out, and the flickering and uncertain light shewed the room in strong light and shadow, which only made its contents the more interesting.

It was an artist's room — his studio, his library, his bedroom, his dressing-room, all in one! — But it was evident on the most cursory view, that the objects of material comfort were held in the utmost indifference, everything being given to art. A sordid little pallet bed stood in one corner, by it a bath, washing-stand, and deal dressing-table and chair. Upon every side, torsos, casts, fragments of marble statues, fragments of oil-painting on wood — and some almost defaced, upon copper — portfolios of prints, sketches by the hands of the great masters; attempts of the young artist in every style and manner, but all shewing a prodigality of invention, and a facility of execution that were really wonderful. These lay scattered about pell mell upon all sides. Some few master-pieces, or copies of master-pieces, were suspended to the walls, mostly without frames, and surrounded by every variety of sketch, original or not, that can be imagined, all fastened up merely with pins, or small nails.

Armand smiled at my look of astonishment.

"You little expected to see such a mass of half-forbidden things in this house?" he said.

"Not just up here, and *as* I see them. You must want light for study in *this* place."

"Not exactly. With my father's connivance, I have contrived a sort of skylight. Do you see it there? — It is covered with a shutter now; but the rain drops from it — do you see? It is impossible to keep that out. No matter; with that skylight and my window, I get light enough, as I want it."

"Mr. Du Chastel seems very much inclined to assist and encourage you in every way," was my insignificant remark.

"Ah, sir! my father! *what* a father!"

"You are fortunate in having to do with such a man. We do not choose our own fathers, and chance furnishes some men with rather difficult ones."

"Chance!" he repeated. "We are not taught to look upon it exactly in that way."

"Providence, you would have said."

"When we receive a great blessing, we want some one to be thankful to. — Are you a lover of art yourself?"

"A most unworthy one, for I know nothing whatever about it. But I suppose we are all of us, more or less, sensible to beauty."

"More or less — yes, more or less — I suppose we are."

"Suppose! Do you not feel sure of it?"

"I sometimes find it hard to believe so."

"By what Mr. Du Chastel has been telling me downstairs, I imagine you do not find yourself under par-

ticularly favourable circumstances in that respect. Art seems little understood or appreciated, I should infer, in your community."

"Understood! appreciated! Sir — they execrate it!"

I stared.

"They look upon it," he went on impetuously, "as an invention of the Demon to betray the souls of men. No wonder! no wonder! when the gorgeous temples of those who have so cruelly trampled upon them are filled, are loaded to satiety, by all that is finest, and purest, and highest in art. They confound it all in one anathema — no wonder! no wonder! They who have passed years surrounded by the bare walls of loathsome prisons; they who have sat chained to the oar, bare-headed, under a fierce burning sun; they who have taken refuge in the barren desert, and there, amid arid rocks and utter desolation, have assembled to worship God; — to *them* these things seem toys, and worse than toys; they associate them with all that is bloody and bad. No wonder! no wonder! But why was I made as I am?"

"Oh, why?" looking round his room. "Why do these things appear to me so divine? — Why does this beauty, this loveliness, eat into my soul, press upon, absorb me? Why cannot I see God as they do? Everywhere find him? In the bare walls of a conventicle as well as in the noble arches of a matchless cathedral? Why cannot I love man, his image — sordid, dege-

nerated, vulgarised, and in rags, as well as when shining forth in immortal beauty? Why cannot I be as the rest of them are? Why this inextinguishable thirst of the soul? Not only to see and adore, but to produce, to create? Why? why am I alone forbidden to adorn the temple of God with the images of those by his highest gift and power created?"

I looked at his flashing eye and countenance, beaming as with a glory of inspiration, transfigured — if without irreverence I may use the expression — by the divine light from within. I could make no answer — I could only utter a heavy sigh, which I did from my soul.

I understood the situation, and pitied him from my heart.

The glow of enthusiasm had already subsided. He seemed a little ashamed of having given way to it; he coloured, looked down, and was silent; but, as I did not speak, he presently raised his head and held out the candle which he had lighted — but I was in no humour to go. I longed to hear more — I was much interested.

"I should be sorry you mistook me," he said, still presenting the candle. "I would not for the universe appear ungrateful to my father. You have seen what a man he is. His large heart can sympathise with all — with everything — even with me. Do you know, sir, in spite of obstacles and difficulties, which to most men

would have proved insurmountable, and which he, of all men, one should have imagined would have found insurmountable, such is his justice, such his comprehension, such his indulgence, to wants of the soul which he never felt, to sufferings of which he can have little imagination, and certainly has never had the slightest experience — such the noble conduct of that great man, that at the expense of sacrifices which are to him beyond calculation — he has been content to satisfy this burning thirst within me. I accepted *those* sacrifices, great as they were, — for, after all, they were but the sacrifices, however painful, of opinion. But there *are* sacrifices he cannot make, any more than I accept; — whilst our fellow-creatures are starving, we must not think of art.”

“Then he had consented that you should go to Italy?” said I, in a tone that expressed some surprise.

“He had — at what expense of feeling I dared not think. There was something in me that so imperiously demanded what there I should find, that it took the form of a duty — the strongest of duties. It seemed to force me to accept what others would have thought it their first duty to refuse. Yes, at this cost I *had* accepted it; but *now* — ‘we must pluck out the right eye, we must cut off the right hand’ — we must mutilate the very noblest powers and gifts from God, when He calls upon us so to do; and I think — I think — oh! I

cannot hide it from myself — that to this sacrifice He calls me now."

He cast a look of despair around him.

"When I reflect that if it had but been last year that consent was given, and that now I should have been there, and should already have satiated myself with Italy — that I should have been safely landed there, and it would have been useless to recall me — that I should there have learned that which, if not learned, what is art? That I should have become what I feel I might, and now never can become; for time, inexorable time, the golden years of my youth, are escaping, and it will be too late ... Oh! when I think of this! ... But I beg your pardon, sir. It is the first time in my life that I have met with a man who, I feel, could understand me. You do understand me — I see you do."

"I think I thoroughly understand you. But I hope you mistake in thus giving up that as lost which is only delayed. A year or two earlier or later will not decide the matter. Times will mend, and you will get to Italy, fear it not. Where there is a will there is a way, says our homely proverb, and men of resolution experience the truth of it."

CHAPTER IV.

"Demon elements in human hearts impregnated,
Fanaticism blind in her intents."

JOHN EDMUND READE.

THE large city in which Armand's lot seemed cast, was abhorrent to him; yet there, much of his childhood had been spent. He had been reared by the uncle of Mr. Du Chastel, who had received him after his father and mother had been torn away from their child, under circumstances of the most barbarous cruelty.

This great uncle, Jean Du Chastel, was himself a son of the Refuge, and had been carried away from France an infant, when his father and mother made their escape after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He was, however, the younger son of the house.

His elder brother had remained in the country; it so happening, that under the perilous circumstances of their escape, it had been impossible for the parents to rescue both their children. And the elder one happening at that time to be at the home of some connections living at a considerable distance from the father's chateau, had been left behind in security, as it was thought, till some opportunity should arise of sending him across the frontier.

This occasion never presented itself. Indeed that branch of the family with whom the child had remained, was not of a sort particularly inclined to martyrdom.

Their religion had been considered a very proper and respectable thing, so long as it was the distinguishing mark of a numerous and powerful party in the state; but as it gradually sank in importance under the efforts of Richelieu, and began to assume an aspect sufficiently mortifying to the factious and ambitious among the religionists, the zeal of this portion of the family, like that of many others, had begun to cool. Accordingly, when the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes shattered the last hopes of the Protestants, and apparently ruined their cause for ever, these people thought it advisable to conform. This being done, and they having the infant heir of the Du Chastels in their hands, it was not difficult for them to obtain the guardianship of the child and the management of the large estates of the family to which he was heir, upon the condition of pledging themselves to bring up the boy in the religion of his king. —

The result of conversions, either through terror or sense of interest, is usually much the same. Incredulity, as regards all religion, and indifference as regards all causes — except, indeed, when still worse ensues, namely, where the fanaticism and bigotry of the new convert exceeds that even of the party he has been forced, or bribed, to espouse.

In the family where the young Du Chastel of whom we speak was reared, the first consequence had been the result of the change. Perhaps neither young nor old among its members had been sorry to throw off a yoke

which is so galling to avarice, ambition, or love of pleasure; but, be that as it may, one thing is certain, that a mere religion of form succeeded to that which had, with their fathers, been so vital; and the daily mass, the rosary, and the litanies of the Virgin, were found a comfortable substitute for that earnest and conscientious devotion of the heart and life to God, which their earlier teachers had demanded.

A religion of forms is a very easy sort of thing for those who love the world, and yet cannot altogether shake off a certain fear of the devil. But, perhaps, even an utter disregard of all religious observances, is less dangerous to the health of the soul, than the habitual self-satisfaction which arises from dwelling in external performances of this nature. In one state of mind, a man in most cases is secretly ill satisfied with himself, in the other his self-satisfaction is complete. A task is set, and a task is done — and there is an end of it. And therefore it must be, that the publicans and sinners press into the kingdom of Heaven, whilst the Scribes and Pharisees are shut out.

But to return. Charles Du Chastel, the brother of Jean, was reared a Catholic — and *was* an infidel; but his son was the Du Chastel we have found in Spital Fields, where at last, after having suffered every extremity of misery in the cause of the old faith, he had found refuge. He had early adopted the religion of his

fathers, and no power upon earth was found strong enough to persuade him to abandon it.

Anthoine, the father of Jean Du Chastel, grand-father of the present man, with what money he had been able to save from the ruins of his fortune, had taken shelter in England, and had, in partnership with a friend, established himself in Spital Fields as a silk weaver.

There, like most of his brothers of the Refuge, he had succeeded almost beyond hope. The sound, and somewhat severe education which the children of the French Reformation received; their serious and self-denying habits, taught as they were to despise luxury and idleness, and to look upon life as a talent for the employment of which a strict account must be rendered; and upon strenuous devotion to duty, be your vocation what it might, as the prime object of existence; had trained them to those ways of life which secure success in the industrial career. Indeed the prosperity which almost without exception crowned their efforts, and enriched every country where they were received, forms a striking contrast with the fate of that amiable but frivolous race, which succeeded them in the next great emigration, at the end of the last century.

Ambroise Du Chastel established a large and lucrative business in England, and was succeeded by his second son, Jean Du Chastel, who carried it on to the day of

his death. He had married an English lady, but died leaving no children.

In the horrible circumstances under which our present Du Chastel and his young and beautiful wife found themselves, through a persecution which was rendered doubly severe because the young man was considered an apostate — as having forsaken the religion in which he had been educated; — in these horrible circumstances the young parents had contrived, at the risk of their lives, to get their infant son conveyed to England, where Jean Du Chastel had received and sheltered him.

Our M. Du Chastel, the nephew of Jean, having been at length relieved from the galleys under the more lenient system adopted by the young, good-hearted king, Louis the Sixteenth, — and his wife, Madame Du Chastel, having at the same time been set free from the dismal prison of Aigues Mortes — they had, upon the invitation of Jean, come over to England. The estates of the family had descended to a collateral relation, and been lost to them upon occasion of Charles adopting the Reformation; and they had been therefore invited by Jean to settle in Spital Fields, and succeed him in his simple but honourable career. This proposal they had most thankfully accepted, and they had now been living in this country for some years.

The ardent and energetic mind of Du Chastel found full occupation in the pursuit in which he had engaged. He took it up as, according to his idea of the Christian

man, pursuits of this nature ought to be embraced. Not merely with reference to his own individual success and gain, but with an eye to the welfare of every workman connected with him.

He was not versed in political economy — a science at that time in its infancy — he had not learned to look upon men as pure abstract numbers, and the science of human life as one merely of supply and demand; he had learned to regard his fellow-men as fellow-men, and every one with whom he came into connection as his neighbour. How much more, then, those whose daily labour fed his fortune! They were to him not his “hands,” but his people, his dependants, his children. They had heads, and hearts, and stomachs as well as “hands;” and he took care to remember this, and, as far as in him lay, to act accordingly.

His large charity was but another form of his severe self-discipline and self-denial. He loved this grave and serious view of life; he hated luxury, he despised pleasure. God was ever before him. His Great Master, who died upon the cross for mankind, and who had bade him take up his cross and follow in that path, was ever before his eyes; and the martyr spirit which had supported him, chained to the bench of a galley under the burning sun of Languedoc, lived yet, where it is perhaps more difficult to preserve it. The daily sacrifice of his ease, of his tastes, of his time, to the good of others was still maintained; and his son, ardent and

generous, though in constitution so unlike himself, adored him for it.

There was nothing Armand would not have done for his father's sake, even to the sacrifice — the greatest he could be called upon to offer — the sacrifice of his genius. To give up *that* — to abandon the cultivation of that soul of his soul — that light within, which was all he cared for in existence — was more, far more, than the sacrifice of life itself; — but he was ready to make it, if demanded by his father.

But it was not demanded. Du Chastel was a beautiful example — unhappily too rare — of the most perfect indulgence for, and sympathy with, natures totally unlike his own. To live for duty, to love God, and labour for mankind, had been enough for him; but he could understand that others might be constituted differently, and he could enter into, and sympathize with, that burning thirst for art which agitated his son. He believed that, if it were not for good, the Creator of Man would not have endowed human beings with such different faculties, wants, and aspirations. The sort of imperious necessity which Armand felt to become an artist, he might regret — I believe he did regret it — but he would not have the presumption to interfere. He felt that it would be presumption to interfere between the gift of God and the receiver.

He had admitted the justice of what his son so ardently desired, namely, the opportunity for cultivating

his genius, by that instruction, without which, he knew, genius in the arts of design is dwarfed and mutilated, and never can reach to its due perfection. There is a something mechanical and rudimental which must be acquired before anything of real merit in art can be produced; and life, without the assistance of others, is wasted in vain attempts at discovering that for a man's self, which frequently could be taught him in a week, in an hour. For the individual to have to go through what has been the work of ages, and bring himself unaided up to the mark of his time, is the destruction of all rational aspiring.

Mr. Du Chastel had, therefore, consented that his son should visit Italy, and in the meantime had determined upon giving him the means of obtaining such instruction as England at that time could offer. Scanty and imperfect at best — for art at that period was at a very low ebb in this country: he had done this, however, at very great expense of feeling.

There was one whom he loved with all the passion of his heart, as the beauteous being who had sacrificed her life for him, and worshipped as the sainted one, who had opened to him the way to heaven. With her, every thought was in common, every feeling shared but *this* — his wife could not endure the idea of an artist in her son.

Women, as I had in conversation with Du Chastel remarked, are more rigid in their ideas than men, be-

cause it is impossible for them to have equally enlarged views. Nature seems to have denied to them as a faculty that wide comprehension of a subject in all its bearings, which is the crowning distinction among men.

Claire Du Chastel had belonged to one of the oldest and most eminent families attached to the reform. Through the female line she claimed descent from Du Plessis Mornay, and the blood of the Colignys mingled with it in her veins. She had been brought up in the strictest religious principles, and in the strictest reformed principles — principles of the ancient, strong, stern, but somewhat narrow, school, which permitted no tampering with truth, and believed that there was but one form of religious truth, and that it was their's. In this respect these old Puritans and Protestants differed little from the corrupted and tyrannous church they so abhorred; and had it not been that no man can conscientiously study his Bible, and imbue himself with the spirit of his Divine Master, without having every principle of his nature softened and modified, often insensibly to himself, by such influence, — it is possible only a fresh form of religious intolerance might have succeeded to the one they so ardently struggled to overthrow.

It must be recollected, too, that these early and more intolerant Protestants, as children and youths, had been brought up by these very Catholics; and the religion in which a man has been educated modifies and influences him to the end of his days.

As the generations lengthened and receded, this principle of intolerance gradually declined; and it is now long since any Protestant has been found daring enough to maintain the right of one man to inflict death upon another, for obeying the dictates of his conscience.

Too much of the spirit, however, alas! still remains among us all. We cannot enter a company of our fellow-men without detecting, wherever the question of religion is propounded, some prejudice of this description still lingering in the heart. It seems the last to be laid down, monstrous and unreasonable as it is. But while the world lasts, I fear, according to the old saying, it will be — “Orthodoxy, mine; heterodoxy, yours.”

Claire Du Chastel — Claire de St. Arvennes was her maiden name — was one of those ardent, enthusiastic natures which peculiarly dispose women to devotion, and self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice seemed, indeed, the very moving principle of her existence. It is that of most remarkable women, whether in love or in religion. Nothing is more beautiful than the purity from all double motive, from all self-seeking, whether of glory, ease, or pleasure, that animates such women. In religion they are saints or seraphs; in love they are angels.

Such was Claire. Her childhood had early been given to God — to His service and to His cause her life had been from infancy devoted. “It is notable,” D’Aubigné remarks, in his fearful times — and the

same spirit prevailed in the almost equally fearful times of the last century — “how early the idea of martyrdom entered into the daily life and thoughts of the children in his day. Quite little ones might be heard describing its nature, speaking upon its probability, and preparing for it, as for one of the most likely events to happen in their lives.”

In the middle of the last century, when Claire Du Chastel was a child, the persecutions of which we in England have heard and known so little, were perhaps still more really dreadful than in the days of the St. Bartholomew. At least, in those, the last-mentioned times, the Protestants were a formidable party in the state, and, however much detested and oppressed, knew how to provide themselves with places of refuge, and to a certain degree make themselves respected; but the Revocation of the Edict deprived them of, at once, every security. It pleased the authorities to decree them to be non-existent — and they were exposed without defence, without the possibility of appeal, to all those details of oppression and misery, which man meets too certainly at the hand of man, when he is entrusted with irresponsible power. Of course, the lower the class to which this fearful authority is given, the more vile and cruel will be its uses.

Claire had seen every detail of vexation, tyranny, and suffering in her own family, or those of her family friends. Her imagination was filled with the dire, yet

noble traditions, of all that had been endured by her suffering church. Her church! her suffering church! became the idol of her soul — if such a feeling may be called idolatry — and perhaps it approaches to it. In times of persecution, this passionate devotion to an oppressed and afflicted church, may be found almost to supersede the love of the Divine Head and Master of that church. It is one of the innumerable evils of religious persecution to excite this feeling.

It was in the full ardour of youthful enthusiasm that Claire de St. Arvennes met with Charles Du Chastel; and one of those sudden, unaccountable passions sprung up between them, which we call love at first sight. An expression which faintly indicates the deep, mysterious, inexplicable sympathy which thus binds one human being to another, stronger than death, and deeper than the grave.

But he was a Catholic and she a Protestant. That they must and would become of one faith, was a necessary consequence of their devotion to each other; but which shall be the faith that must triumph? That was not long in being decided: the religion of Charles Du Chastel could scarcely be called a religion at all. Much fervour of temper, and much devotional sentiment were in his nature; but positive religious faith was hardly to be acquired under the circumstances of his bringing up. His father a professing Catholic, but secret infidel, had confided his education to the ignorant priest of his

parish — a worthy man enough, as most of the curés in country places were — but ignorant and narrow-minded to a degree that exceeds belief — “*d’une ignorance crasse*,” as the French would say.

Charles Du Chastel, therefore, at least escaped the prejudices and pre-judgments which might have been instilled into him by a Jesuit preceptor. His mind was left uncultivated but unoccupied; and in this rich virgin soil, the good seed once sown sprang up in spontaneous vigour, and there were no ill weeds to choke it. Claire taught her lover the principles she had herself been taught — he imbibed their truths — he adopted them with all the intensity of his soul; but in the consequences she drew from them, he did not always coincide. His large heart could not be narrowed to that close field of duty in which she loved to dwell. Hedged in on every side, it was her nature to desire to be; but his soul was expansive as the heavens. Claire sighed and trembled, yet loved him only the more for the perils of his soul, in these its daring flights of self-assertion — liberty of conscience carried out into all its consequences. She never cast a thought upon the personal dangers to which the apostasy, as it was called, which was her work, might expose him.

He smiled indulgently at her fears for his salvation — he had none for himself. He felt a brave confidence in the singleness of his heart, and the all-seeing Saviour to whom it was devoted. He, who knew what was in

man, would know the honesty of purpose with which he dared to be free in his faithfulness.

They neither of them troubled themselves, as I have said, about the worldly dangers that surrounded them, till the bolt fell.

It would take me too long to enter into details. Suffice it to say, that having secretly married, they had suffered persecution in all its most frightful forms; — endured by the young and delicate woman for her husband's sake, with a heroism that enshrined her in his heart, as saint and martyr, a holy reverence for whom, henceforward formed the ruling passion of his life. He suffered upon the galleys all that the man of soft and elegant habits, refined tastes, and exquisite moral and physical sensibility — has to suffer under that execrable form of penal infliction. Yet to him it was as nothing. His thoughts were ever in that prison of Aigues-Mortes, into which his wife had been thrown, after having been tortured by the infuriated soldiers, because she would not betray the place of her husband's concealment, and thus enable them to obtain the price put upon his head. Her nerves shattered, her health and spirits destroyed, long did she expiate, in that dismal prison, her love and fidelity to him.

The tower of Constance at Aigues-Mortes, into which Claire was cast, and where she languished ten years, is thus described by Bungener, in his interesting work *Trois Sermons sous Louis Quinze*.

“Two large round chambers situated one above the other, and filling up the whole of the tower — The one below only receives light through the upper one, by means of a hole of about six feet in diameter; the one above is only lighted by a similar hole, placed in the centre of the vaulted roof. Through this hole above, the smoke finds issue, and the air entrance, and with the air rain, wind, snow, and cold, as the case may be.”

In this place, so late as the middle of the very last century — (within five-and-thirty years indeed of the beginning of the present — not a century ago!) — lived and died within the royal prison — locked in by the holy Catholic church — a number of poor women, guilty of no fault in the world but this, that they had gone to offer prayers to God in the desert with their brothers in the faith, or might have sent their children there, or else had refused to betray the men who ministered to their spiritual need. Many have been here fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years. Marie Durand, thirty; Anne Gaussaint, thirty-eight.

In vain were petitions made in their behalf by Protestants and Catholics, Frenchmen and foreigners. The more innocent they were, the less their chance of redress. To release them would have been in a manner to acknowledge that they had been unjustly incarcerated!

* * * *

At last the lovers, the severed husband and the devoted wife, were suffered to meet again — but how?

He, an aged man, bronzed with toil, his hair grizzled, his figure bent with the intensity of labour; but he was of a strong constitution, and he recovered this in time. She, trembling, wasted, attenuated, with scarcely breath or spirits left to enjoy the air and sun to which she was at last restored. The air chilled, the light of the sun amazed and dazzled her; the cheerful sounds of life startled and made her shiver from head to foot with inexplicable terrors!

The intensity of these symptoms gradually wore away; but her constitution never rallied. It had received too severe a shock — some mysterious internal injury, it is probable there was — but, however that might be, she continued in languishing health from that time to the day of her death — though she lived many years.

She lay there as I had seen her; a sufferer incapable of action, patiently enduring the consequences of her long and horrible martyrdom. Cheered by the intense devotion of her husband, and by the love and attentions of her son; occupied more than ever with the interests of her religion, and still more earnest, if possible, in her sense of its demands. It had been the secret hope and wish of her heart, that her son should become a minister in the church of the Refuge in London; her distress,

therefore, may be imagined, when she discovered how different an object he had proposed to himself in life; and how totally alien to all hopes of this sort was the turn of his disposition and talents.

So thoughtful, so gentle, yet so enthusiastic, eloquent, and imaginative, what might he not have been in the pulpit? Were all these fine talents to be wasted — worse than wasted — in the mere cultivation of an art? An art which she could hardly call evil; yet which it was impossible for her to look upon as altogether blameless.

Persecution has a tendency to narrow the views of the sufferers, as well as to harden the hearts of the inflictors. It must be a fine and strong intellect which can resist this, and come forth from suffering in the cause of God, into his bright, beautiful, multitudinous creation, and believe that everything in it which *is* good — is good. A dark shadow had fallen upon Claire's imagination, and all the more festive part of this world's life, however innocent, was as much in discord with the tenor of her thoughts and feelings, as gay music in the house of death.

Du Chastel had endeavoured long and vainly to overcome these scruples upon the part of his wife; all he could obtain in return for his arguments, was submission, perfectly gentle and uncomplaining, but which evidently cost her so much, that he felt it, for some

time, impossible to accept it from the saintly sufferer and martyr; and Armand had acquiesced in the sentiment.

His education, therefore, in art, had till now been almost entirely limited to what he could do unassisted for himself, and he was now in his eighteenth year; but his persevering industry and self-denial, which it could not be concealed from her, cost her son so much, began, by degrees, to produce its effect upon the mother's heart.

She was beginning to yield to the representations of her husband, and her direct opposition had been lately withdrawn; so that Armand was making preparations to visit Italy, — when events of the period in which I first became acquainted with them had altered, for the present, all their ideas upon the subject. The misery which had swept like a flood over their little community, absorbed every other consideration.

CHAPTER V.

“For these, I felt the sickness and the weariness of heart
Of him who feels the hollow shows in which he bore no part;
The heaviness and languor of the hope that he hath tried,
Conventions lie. . . .”

JOHN EDMUND READE.

“WHAT are my ‘hands’ to me?” said Mr. Marston to Du Chastel; “I pay them the market price for their labour, and so we are quits. It’s their own fault — the improvident rascals! Why don’t they lay by against a rainy day? Why, Mr. Du Chastel, you astonish me — with such notions as yours, we should all be in the Gazette in six months — (as you will be some of these days, my fine fellow);” added he to himself, but he did not say this aloud. Mr. Du Chastel’s character and manner imposed even upon Mr. Marston, hard, and gross, and self-opinionated, as he was.

“I cannot see the matter in that light” — was all Mr. Du Chastel said in reply; but he also had a reserve in his own mind; and thus as the two parted, and Du Chastel slowly turned his steps homeward, did they form themselves into mental words — if the expression may be permitted.

“Certainly, not in his light do I see it — and God grant that I never may. I cannot separate the interests of those on whose labour I exist, from my own. There is, and ought to be, reciprocation. God did not send us into this world for the mere purposes of selfish acqui-

sition. It is base and monstrous to imagine so. He whom I maintain, and who contributes to maintain me, becomes a relation — Relation — What is relation? Not merely a connection of blood, but of contiguity also. The immutable, indefeasible laws of civil justice, of the mere debtor and creditor account of justice it may be, acquits me from further obligation when the wage contracted for is paid; but is such the law of Christ? Nay, are such the dictates of the most ordinary feelings of a heart of flesh! They do greatly err who teach such doctrines — a strange, unnatural production of an age professing universal brotherhood and philanthropy. This cold severance between the interests of the employer and the employed! Marston is a hard man by nature, that is evident; but his principles carried out into habitual action, would harden the softest heart; and the fatal habit of turning the eye from suffering, having once adopted the principle that it is no concern of ours, renders sympathy or pity alike impossible."

So he mused for a short time: but the mistakes of others seldom occupied his thoughts long; his own life and purpose lay clear and distinct before him — there should be no sorrow or suffering that it was within his power by any exertion or any sacrifice to prevent.

Mr. Marston walked homewards meditating upon the immense advantage he should receive from a bargain he had just concluded in raw cotton. He was himself in possession of certain private intelligence, by which he

was assured there would speedily be a great fall in the market. He had managed to dispose of a very large quantity of the above merchandise at the present price, assured that a heavy depreciation would take place in the course of a few days. It proved as he anticipated. The man with whom he had concluded the bargain was ruined, Mr. Marston pocketed tens of thousands, and proposed adding a new wing to his cotton factory in Lancashire.

After having exhausted the self-congratulation upon the topic above-mentioned, his thoughts wandered on to the subject of wages and periods of labour; and he was not long in calculating the great loss which arose from the time, small as it then was, allotted to recreation and rest. Would it not be possible to abridge this? And yet it was true his hands laboured night and day. The wheel of that mighty machine for calico-making — that machine composed of so many human heads and palpitating hearts, and so many whizzing, ever-circling wheels — never stood still, except, indeed, upon the Sabbath; for that, God, not man, had taken care. But upon week days, or rather nights, the long line of light from the windows of his factory — of all factories in those days — might be seen, so soon as twilight closed, gleaming from end to end; and within, weary little children pining for sleep, were being kept awake by the strap, and youths and young maidens, labouring through the feverish hours of night, were laying the foundation

in their exhausted frames of that fearful scrofula, which was the normal condition of a cotton girl or boy in those days.

Those things are past now — but they have left a lesson behind them. We look with horror upon them, at this time of day; but let us remember how long they were suffered to exist in a society of men, I suppose, upon the whole, pretty nearly as good as ourselves, and let us beware of *use*, beware of being *used* to evil and wrongs; let us remember the opposition that was made in that day to the making night-work illegal, just as it has been in ours, to the reasonable limitation of day labour. How the enactment was to be the ruin of trade, and with it, forsooth, the miserable victims who were half, and only half, fed by that trade. Let us not forget the difficulties with which the Ten Hours' Bill had to contend. The opposition made to it by men neither unprincipled nor hard-hearted; and let us beware — beware of the insensibility of custom, and refuse to rest, till the monstrous ills yet remaining in our system are swept away.

And one of the greater magnitude surely is, this indifference professed and practised by manufacturers for their "*hands*," whether working in factories or in their own chambers. Were the real relation which exists between employer and employed thoroughly understood, and conscientiously acted upon — as it is, thank God! in

some of our largest establishments in London* — the evils of our vast industrial system would be almost at an end.

Little thought or cared Mr. Marston for general questions of this nature. Little thought or cared he how many little children drooped and died, how many young women lay tortured with consumptive scrofula; how many young men drooped and dwindled, fell into crippled premature old age, in consequence of the unnatural system of night-work; he thought no more of them than of the wheels and shafts for ever turning, and of the wear and tear resulting from their rapid motion.

The scarcity was general; the sufferings of the working classes were not confined to Spital Fields, though there, from the present decline in trade, they were more especially severe. Did Mr. Marston trouble himself with thinking how to feed his famishing "hands?" Oh, no; the minimum of wages at which they could possibly be kept alive, in the present scarcity, so that their diminution might not upset the labour market — ay, he called it the market — was what he looked after.

The thoughts of Du Chastel, as he continued his walk homewards, had, like those of Mr. Marston, returned from general speculations to matters nearer home — his starving fellow labourers in Spital Fields. What was it possible to do? He had already reduced

* Some of the great breweries, and Price's Candle Factory, for instance.

his own expenses to the lowest conceivable degree; but how fill that yawning gulf of every day increasing famine, and every day diminished resources? He had purchased their silks, and kept his own weavers at work, as long as his resources lasted; but they were now beginning to fail. Fashion had, as I have said, suddenly changed; and the rich brocades and satins once universally called for, lay in neglected bales in the warehouses. Muslins, light Manchester chintzes, were the only wear. They robed themselves, like nymphs in all the simplicity of the antique — those fair leaders of ton — and talked of the sufferings of beetles and worms, and their fellow-creatures a few hundred yards off, were perishing in an utterness of destitution and misery, that the poor of large towns only know. Yet we must not be severe upon these fair votaries of fashion; they really knew nothing about this misery — hard-heartedness is mostly but a form of ignorance.

Armand entered into all his father's feelings. Of course the journey to Italy was for the present given up. The sole object which they, living in the heart of all this misery, could attend to, was the relief of it.

At length, in the very midst of that fearful winter, light sprang up.

Mr. Du Chastel's warehouses were, as I have said, weighed down with bales of rich silks, for which he could find no demand whatever. As long as there was a possibility of finding the means, he had still persisted

in giving work to his people — that is, the raw material of silk, and the patterns which the master-weaver supplies to the looms that are worked in the private houses. He thought — whether wrongly or rightly, let wiser than myself decide — that, at all events, it was better to supply work as long as possible, than endeavour to maintain the weavers in idleness. The consequence was, that he had an immense stock of manufactured goods upon his hands, and the deficiency in the demand had far exceeded his worst anticipations. Just as he beheld with dismay his resources altogether about to fail him, from the impossibility of disposing of the vast amount of dead stock thus accumulated, hope sprung up from an unexpected quarter. An opening appeared in the East. A large order was offered him from the Levant market. From some cause or other not worth explaining, there was a sudden demand for goods of the description above-mentioned; and the proposal was made to Du Chastel — not only to purchase the goods already in his hands, but to furnish a large additional supply. There were, however, some considerable drawbacks to this apparently advantageous proposal. Long credit was demanded; and Du Chastel's resources were already exhausted.

His advances had been so large, to keep his workmen in employment, that the stock accumulated had absorbed almost the whole of the capital he could command.

Upon the other hand, the credit of the parties who desired to enter into this contract appeared to be un-

questionable, were it but possible to keep things going till the returns should come in. This, so far as the stock in hand was concerned, was not a matter of much moment; the capital lay locked up in it now, and for how much longer it might so remain, was impossible to say. This present offer would, though at the end of a considerable period, release it; but how find the means of completing the order — of continuing to furnish goods not yet in existence, and the means to produce which, in the first instance, it was difficult to obtain.

And yet to relinquish the plan — to lose so fair an opportunity, not only for rescuing the weavers from their present almost intolerable distress, but, by opening a new branch of commerce, when trade, in some fresh quarter, was so greatly wanted; and which, if rejected, would in all probability be carried elsewhere, to Derby and other northern manufacturing towns, which were starting up in fearful competition with the old industry of Spital Fields, was — a thought not to be endured.

Du Chastel was thrown into a state of the most anxious deliberation.

He met his brothers in the trade upon the subject of this important affair; but he found them cautious and cold. Few of them retained those ideas of Christian duty, and strong Christian reliance, which had distinguished their ancestors of old. The scoffing, incredulous spirit of the day, had found its way among these descendants of those brave old men of God, who had risked

every possession upon earth in the cause of their religion. Nay, it would seem not only here, but in Scotland and elsewhere in England, the very families whose ancestors had been most distinguished for the austerity of their religious opinions, were among the most numerous of those who fell into apostasy.

Du Chastel found no responsive feeling among his fellow master-weavers. They were most of them as indifferent to any duties connected with their "hands," as Mr. Marston himself could be. They were moreover, in general, in considerable embarrassment themselves, owing to the unfortunate competition of trade. They were discontented and turbulent, inclined to the loose social principles then beginning to prevail upon the other side the water — restless, impatient for change — any change seeming as if it must benefit them. Mr. Du Chastel's representations were met with indifference, or civil contempt. The most part had far other schemes in their head, for the relief of the present misery. He talked of work and a market — they of the rights of man, and the oppressions of the great. He inquired whether it would be possible, by united capital, to open a fresh branch of trade — they of new restrictions, duties, and sumptuary laws. They would have women forced to wear satins and velvets, as the liberty boys in Birmingham half murdered men who wore shoe ties. In brief, there was nothing to be done with them.

Du Chastel found himself standing alone, and a sort

of stranger, with his chivalric Christianity, in this dawn of other days. He saw there was nothing to be hoped for, but from his own personal exertions; and he turned to himself, and cast himself upon Him who is Lord and Master of all.

Long and seriously did he ponder the matter before he took advice of any one but of that secret Counsellor, who speaks through the pure, honest dictates of the conscience and understanding, to those who stand still and listen.

The good to be hoped for was really enormous. So many silent looms at once restored to activity, and the cheerful sound of the treddles substituted for the mute despair of unbroken stillness! Bread and fire, and clothing, in every home! The pinched features, the staring, wolfish eye of famine, exchanged for cheerful smiles and healthy action — life for death — joy for woe unutterable — hope! sunshine! peace!

Was it an argument against this, that the good would, after all, be only partial? — that the order, large as it was, would only employ a few?

A few! One, two, three, twenty, thirty, forty, a hundred families, snatched from this extremity of misery, and restored to comfort and happiness! Was that nothing, because it could not be all?

That a good will be limited, is that an argument for feeble man to use? When shall we do good, if not content to do it partially?

Du Chastel considered the subject in all its bearings.

It was the habit of his mind to do this — but, in fact, in this instance it was more in obedience to what he thought right, that he had paused, than to any uncertainty. His mind might be said to have been made up from the first moment the proposal was made to him; and that was to dare the venture.

When he had finally taken his determination, he opened himself to his wife and son.

With Claire there was not the hesitation of a moment. She saw the good in view, and paused not a second to calculate the cost.

Armand seemed to view the matter differently.

They sat over the fire in that room I have described. Claire, as usual, was extended upon her sofa; Mr. Du Chastel in his large arm-chair by her side, at one corner of the hearth; Armand upon a low stool opposite. Du Chastel had just finished an exposition of the proposal; of the advantages it presented, the difficulties to be overcome, and the risks to be incurred.

He was answered by enthusiastic exclamations of thankfulness upon the part of Claire, who, half rising from her bed of pain, her hands clasped, her colour mounting high, her eyes lifted up in an ecstasy of gratitude, saw nothing, heard nothing, thought of nothing, but that help for the miserable was at hand.

Armand sat quite still; his eyes were fixed upon his

father. There was a grave sadness in his face, which ill responded to his mother's ecstasy.

She was too much occupied with her own delight to think of him; but Du Chastel, whilst one hand clasped that of his wife, pleased with a passionate warmth and undoubting confidence, in which he could not perhaps altogether share, turned to his son, whose silence had attracted his attention, and was struck with the expression of his face.

"Well, my son, what then? Do you not feel with your mother?"

"I feel with both — for both. Oh, father!"

"What then?"

"This — I cannot see it in the light my mother does."

"How!" cried Claire, vehemently; "you would hesitate? — You would hesitate one single instant to banish every other consideration, when the wretches about you are starving? — Starving! Possibly you do not know what it is to be starving — but your father and I *do*."

And she cast a look of inexpressible feeling upon her husband.

"Mother," said Armand, rising from his seat, coming up to her, and endeavouring to take her hand, "don't be displeased with me."

She looked at him strangely, with a sad look of surprise; the look seemed to say, are you *his* son? He took it patiently, as he was accustomed to take such misconceptions on her part, which would occur at times on

some subject or other where there was little sympathy between them.

"I merely intend to say, my dear mother, that I think my father is about to run a very great risk — a risk, perhaps, we ought neither of us, be the motive what it may, to wish him to run."

"You are very full of prudential considerations," said she, coldly, dropping his hand. "We used to look upon things differently when we were at your age."

"Nay, nay," put in Du Chastel, "my Claire, be not unjust. I think — is it not so, Armand? — you would be as ready to peril all you love in life, and life itself, for a good cause as any of us. He is doing it now, Claire. Every hour of that boy's day is a sacrifice."

She looked uncertainly, pressing her husband's hand, and gazing into his face — that face from which she drew confidence, truth, assurance, opinion, everything.

"You know, my Claire," he said, "that your son has already offered up all that was dearest to him, for the sake of these wretched, starving men. He has cut off his right hand and cast out his right eye, rather than divert to his own uses one sixpence of the scanty means we possess, to help them. You do not seem to understand — sympathising as you are to every form of suffering or self-denial — how much he gives up, in abandoning the plan to which you had at last brought yourself to consent. The extent of the self-devotion he shows is a hidden thing from you."

"The sacrifice is, after all, but that of an idol of the fancy," she said. "I think him happy that he has done with such things."

"But having done with them — having made the sacrifice of what is dearest to him, I feel, Claire," Mr. Du Chastel went on, and the man of unswerving justice spoke to this idol of his soul with something of that severity, or, at least, seriousness of voice, which proved that he thought her wrong — "I feel, Claire, that your son has a right to be heard. He has proved himself, at least, as ready to help his fellow-creatures as any of us. Speak, Armand; tell us what is on your mind."

"I have not much to say," said Armand, gently, and looking down. "I don't feel as if I had a right even to offer an opinion upon this subject. You looked at me, sir, and asked me what I was thinking of. My face, I believe, told more than I intended."

"It seemed to me to say that you did not share in your mother's anticipations. You have a right to be consulted. I will not risk the whole of what would eventually be yours, without, at least, giving you a voice upon the matter."

"I was not thinking of myself, but of you," Armand might have most truly said. But he was of a nature to shrink most sensitively from the slightest self-assertion of this nature. A slightly impatient motion of the head when his father alluded to his own prospects, was, however, sufficient to make Du Chastel understand him.

"I am doing you injustice myself at this moment," he said. "Your own interest was the last thing you were thinking of."

"Indeed it was."

"Then you were anxious upon my account?"

"I could not help it. My mother has a braver spirit — I am cowardly. I do not wonder she despises me," he said, with a slight tinge of bitterness in his tone.

"Despise you, Armand! — Oh, no!"

"Never mind it, mother dear," recovering his temper at once; "I cannot wonder that you are disappointed in me. The son of my father ought to have been different, I feel; but such as I am, I am. The prospect of my father, a broken-hearted bankrupt, struggling with poverty and shame, is a picture, I own, that appals me."

"Who talks of any such thing?" said Claire. "Your father assures me this speculation is as safe as it is opportune."

"I did not quite say that; but I believe it to be reasonably safe," said Du Chastel. "Why do not you, Armand, regard it in the same way? Have you any reason, of which I am ignorant, for doubting the stability of Bonnivetta's house?"

"No, sir; but the credit to be granted is unusually long, — is it not?"

"Certainly; but there will be a difficulty, not to say risk, in disposing of the goods. They look a

good deal to the great eastern fairs, that of Nishni Novogorod, more especially. Long credits are, I understand, granted there. I think I comprehend the absolute necessity of the condition, so it creates no distrust in mind."

"That is not exactly the difficulty I think I see. How are the weavers to be paid whilst executing the fresh orders? We have no funds — will Bonnivetta's house make advances?"

"Child," said the mother, with some disgust, "how you talk! One would think you were a mere scheming tradesman. I thought you were an artist, not a dealer."

"Let him be, Claire — he speaks sense. But how all these things came into your head, Armand, I am at a loss to divine. This calculating talent of yours has started up, no one knows how, or why."

But Armand knew how and why.

It was intense love for his father, intense anxiety for the interests of one who never thought of his own, that had suddenly called to life in the son thoughts and powers which the poetic dreams of art had, till then, concealed.

He thought he saw his father, from a generous benevolence which he could have fallen down prostrate and adored, running the risk of overwhelming ruin. It seemed to be revealed to him, by a species of intuition, that the plan was not a safe one, and that through it Du Chastel would, sooner or later, be shipwrecked. And yet what could he say? Did he feel less acutely for

the horrible distress that surrounded him than his father or mother did? Oh, no! perhaps he felt it still more. The exquisite sensibility of his temperament, the almost morbid acuteness of his perceptions, either for pain or pleasure, made him, with a heart at least as kind and generous as theirs, still more alive than even they were, to the horrors that surrounded them.

Should he interfere to divert the warm current of his father and mother's sympathy from these pitiable objects, and throw obstructions in the way of any plan which held out the hope of relief?

Better they should all perish together.

But his heart kept yearning to his father — he would and he would not. The idea of the scheme which would effect this great rescue from misery being abandoned, was insupportable; yet his heart melted to his father. Oh! that he could have incurred this risk alone, and left that toil and pain-worn hero to rest in the harbour where he was at peace! That he should venture forth again — again be exposed to all the buffets of outrageous fortune, he who had already suffered so much! Oh! that he could bear this cross for him! How gladly, thankfully, would he have taken it up — but that was impossible. One more glance he cast at Du Chastel, sighed, and was silent.

“Well, my boy, have you nothing more to say?” Mr. Du Chastel went on, playfully.

“Nothing. What ought I to have to say? A child,

a mere raw boy, as I am. Only this, sir! — father! do what you will, what you think right and best, but promise me that I shall be allowed to stand by you. Where you go, I will go; where you risk all, I will risk all. My uncle left me a trifle of my own, as you have told me. You will take that, and everything I have besides; every hour of my day, every thought of my heart. You will not refuse me this copartnership, father?"

"No, Armand, I will not; and God bless you in yours, as he has blessed me in you. You see, mother, you have yet to learn to understand your son."

"He is a good boy," said Claire.

And so the matter was settled.

No more was said upon the subject. It seemed to be understood among them that the proposal should be accepted; the small fortune settled upon Armand being employed to furnish capital for the production of the new articles that were called for. Once more the pleasant sound of the clicking loom was heard through the long-lined windows. Health and plenty, cheerfulness, cleanliness, the voice of joy were in their dwellings once more. The advantage was more generally diffused than even Du Chastel had ventured to hope. It seemed as if a general stimulus had been given to trade by his courageous venture. Everything appeared to be going on well.

The change, as I went down those identical streets which I had visited with so much pain but a few months before, was scarcely to be believed.

They did not seem the same places.

Spring had succeeded to winter, and the pleasant sun glistened upon the little panes of the long windows and upon the pointed roofs of the houses; casements were thrown open, larks and thrushes were whistling in cages, and telling of primrose and violet banks, hazel and beech copses. Geraniums, and lilacs, and rose trees, and other favourite plants and flowers were in the windows, through which pleasant, healthy faces of young women, with their braided hair, or of little merry children, might be seen peeping, and the loom went merrily on above.

All was busy, honest industry.

Du Chastel tasted the full reward of what he had done. The risk seemed diminishing every day. Some money had begun already to turn in. Bonnivettas reported that their sales had exceeded expectation. Fresh orders were sent, and, what was better, the capital necessary for executing them was provided.

Du Chastel was employed from morning till night. He was an indefatigable labourer; be his employment what it would, congenial or not, it mattered little to him. That which he had to do, was what God had called upon him to do. His servant he was, labouring in His vineyard in the place appointed, whatever that might be — sweeping the streets, chained to the oar, or buried among account-books in the countinghouse of a close, narrow street in Spital Fields — it was the same man.

The same great, good, brave, generous warrior.

CHAPTER VI.

"No need of witcheries such as these
My fancy to enthrall,
When in her smile my snared heart sees
A lure beyond them all."

W. C. BENNETT.

THE father's way lay straight before him.

He had received that earnest, sober, severe religious bias, which well prepared him, as it did so many of his brethren of the Reform, to walk on upright, unflinching, in the plain, direct road of duty.

The task appointed for the son was more difficult.

He could not be as his father was.

As well may the coursing antelope be compared with the noble bull.

Genius! noble, glorious, dangerous, often fatal gift, was inborn in him.

His mind was one bright, glowing, sunshiny garden of beauteous and delicate flowers. Flowers that could ill have abided those storms and struggles, which had strengthened the more robust temperament of the father's mind into such rare perfection.

Much there was of intellectual pre-eminence, as well as of moral force, in Du Chastel himself; but his endowments perhaps scarcely equalled those of his son.

True genius is as remarkable for the powers of the understanding as for those of the imagination — for

those of the pure reason, as for the exquisite perception of external objects. Generally, but not always, the moral perfection equals these glorious treasures of intelligence, and the heart is as tender and generous as the intellect is true. And such was pre-eminently the case with Armand Du Chastel; his heart was as noble, honest, and good, as his genius was great.

* * * * *

Armand happened, once upon a time, to be walking down the Haymarket one full Opera night, not with design to visit the Opera, but merely taking this way on his return from a late ramble in Hyde Park.

The Opera, like other entertainments of that description, was a forbidden indulgence to the stricter children of the Reform; though in the present generation — whether wisely or not — they were beginning to relax considerably as respected this, and other indulgences of the same nature.

Armand had been brought up according to the principles of what may be called the old school; though his father's confidence in him and natural indulgence of temper was such, that he was left much more to the guidance of his own inclinations than most young men of his age around him.

He had made use of this liberty in cultivating his sense of beauty and of art, by spending much time visiting such collections of pictures as were at that period open to the public: — few they were, and but

scantly provided with master-pieces. Yet there was enough to kindle his enthusiasm, and develope that taste for the really excellent, which was at once the distinction of his genius, and yet a difficulty in the exercise of his talent.

For, perhaps, I may be allowed to remark by the way, that a somewhat low standard of excellence, and considerable self-estimation, very much assist the exercise of mere talent; whilst they are inconsistent with the possession of the finer order of genius. Genius, which lives in despair from the impossibility of giving a reality to its highest conceptions, and from intense and hopeless admiration of what the giants in art have effected.

Much of Armand's time also was spent wandering in the secluded and beautiful scenery which at that period, upon so many sides, surrounded London; for his thirst after natural beauty was insatiable.

He had passed, then, this afternoon in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens; filling his eye with the noble groups and subjects presented to it, and his soul with all those high thoughts and feelings which Nature as he viewed her — ever spiritualized and glorified by the life and light within — excited. But after he had left these scenes, entering the town by Piccadilly, and mingling in the busy world that was thronging St. James' Street, these thoughts in his excitable imagination gave way to others of a different description; equally

interesting to that artist spirit of his, though as opposite as possible in their character.

There had been a drawing-room at St. James's, and the carriages proceeding to the Opera were filled with ladies in the rich court dresses, high plumes, and splendid array of diamonds and other jewels which they had worn upon the occasion, who were now making their way to the Opera House.

The carriages hurried by. The beauty of the women, the splendour of the dresses, the magnificence of the equipages and richly caparisoned horses, as displayed by the flashing flambeaux of the running footmen, called up a new train of ideas.

Magnificence is in itself an eminently poetic thing, and he felt the beauty of this splendid scene of artificial life with the same intensity as he had given to the wild solitudes and nightingales of the Kensington Gardens an hour before.

The stream of carriages took the direction of King Street, and so through St. James's Square; and Armand followed it, and turned into the Haymarket, intending so to make his way home; but, at the door of the Opera House, he was stopped by the crowd assembled to look on. And as he stood thus, and watched carriage after carriage stopping, and creatures, as it appeared by the flashing and uncertain lights, more beautiful than houris descending from them, and his eye drank in with delight the rich colouring of the dresses, the beauty of

the floating plumes, and brightness of the jewels, a sudden intoxication came over him — a sort of passion of delighted admiration, as he drank it all in. And, as the bustle of carriages gradually gave way, and the crowd of spectators began to disperse, just as the last party, consisting of a very beautiful splendidly-attired woman, apparently of middle age, a young and rather dark and awkward-looking man, and a sweet, simply-dressed young girl, passed him and entered the Opera House — he felt an invincible desire to follow them.

A moment he hesitated. It was as the hesitation of Cæsar on the banks of the Rubicon; and the sudden resolution with which he plunged in and crossed the fatal threshold, was perhaps as big with consequences in the narrow circle of his individual life as that of the conqueror himself, to the world.

The threshold is crossed, and through doors opening and shutting, the sound of the band giving passionate voice to the overture to the "Orfeo" of Gluck was at intervals heard.

He would not pause to consider. The thought of his mother with her scruples and terrors was thrust aside — even some doubts as to the approbation of his father, were overruled. With something of the dogged determination which might be detected in him upon subjects where his artistic nature impelled him, he went up to the man who was delivering pit tickets, elbowed aside one or two persons that were coming up for the

same purpose as himself, paid his money with a hand trembling with impatience, rather seized than took his ticket, and entered the house.

The last notes of the orchestra, in one over-whelming burst of sound, filled as with a sort of atmosphere of harmony the vast crowded and brilliant hall, which opened upon his astonished sight.

To his unaccustomed senses, what a blaze of brightness and magnificence! — of light — colour — splendour!

The tiers of boxes, with their gilded panels and rich crimson curtains, were filled to over-flowing, from the floor to the ceiling, with a perfect galaxy, as he thought, of female beauty, which the darker crowd in the pit seemed only to throw into more brilliant relief. And as he turned his bewildered and dazzled eyes to the stage, the curtain drew up, and all the witchery of the scene was added to this world of enchantment, as, with a voice exquisite beyond description, Signor Melico began his recitative.

To describe what he felt is impossible; and to make it understood by those familiar and accustomed from infancy to such scenes, it would be vain to attempt. It was the first time Armand had entered a theatre of any description whatsoever.

The effect was transcendant.

His head swam, his eyes dazzled; the very powers of perception seemed about to leave him. It was a con-

siderable time before he could recover himself sufficiently to realise exactly where he was.

He found himself placed nearly opposite to the centre of the stage, and leaning against the lower tier of boxes — for, indeed, he could scarcely stand, his emotion was so great.

He remained there for some time immovable, devouring with eye and ear the dazzling sights and delicious sounds presented to him; and it was not until the first act having terminated, there was the usual pause — that he found himself sufficiently recovered from his excitement to look around and begin to distinguish objects.

His eye travelled from tier to tier — from box to box; to the royal box, which was filled with princely personages, dressed with unusual magnificence, and thence around the house, crowded with women of wondrous beauty.

At last it was arrested.

Upon the ground tier, a little distance from where he stood, he discovered the group which had enticed him into the Opera House.

There was the richly-dressed lady, whose beauty, now seen in repose, exceeded very much what he had thought it before; his eye was for a moment fixed and magnetised by it — but it was only for a moment. This lady sat in front of her box, and behind her was a gentleman very finely dressed, as was the fashion of

the day; and this splendid display seemed to be enhanced and set off by the simple figure of the young girl, dressed with the most perfect simplicity in white, who sat in front upon the opposite side.' She wore no ornament but her large flowing curls of the finest hair, which fell abundantly round her almost infantine head and shoulders.

The dark youth, whom he had seen enter the Opera House in her company, stood behind her, and to him she addressed herself when she spoke at all — for the first-described couple were far too much absorbed with their own conversation to appear to trouble themselves about their companions.

But the young girl said little; she seemed, like Armand himself, dazzled and almost bewildered with the scene before her; at which she continued to gaze with a pretty expression of wonder and admiration, which had in it almost a touch of terror.

Nothing could be more charming than her countenance — than the wild fawn-like expression of her eyes, the ever-changing mobility of her features, and the ever-varying play of expression which chased each other over her face, like the flying clouds in a summer's sky.

He felt sure that she, like himself, was enjoying this splendid scene for the first time; and he thought it a delightful link of sympathy, which seemed to draw them together — poor, imaginative, foolish boy that he was!

The dark and forbidding-looking young man, who stood behind the young lady's chair, stooped down from time to time to address her; and then she would lift up a countenance which, in every change, he thought only more and more charming, and would answer him with a light, girlish, animated look, turning to the scene again, however, as soon as she had done speaking, as if unwilling to lose the smallest part of what was going on before her.

He, on his side, did not seem to care to speak much. He, too, seemed to be occupied in looking — but it was not upon the stage. His eyes were rivetted upon her. Never once were they taken away. She, however, appeared perfectly unconscious of this, and answered him when he spoke with a playful ease and simplicity, which proved she was either unobservant of, or indifferent to, this apparently deep devotion.

Armand felt himself already vexed and irritated at it. Yet something in the manner of the young lady pacified him, and he continued to watch her with almost undiminished pleasure.

And now, the curtain draws up again, and a sort of grotesque Chinese dance, the subject of the *entrée* between the acts, is performed. And then he listened with a new delight to the young creature's childish bursts of mirth, throwing herself back and laughing like a fool — as some people would have it.

She had the laughter all to herself, however.

Her beautiful chaperon having cast one glance at the stage, returned to her conversation; and as to the young man who stood behind herself, not all the comical antics of the performers could move one muscle of his face.

At a fresh burst of her ringing laughter, he condescended to cast one glance at the stage, but, shrugging his shoulders, turned away again, with a look of cool contempt — a contempt in which, to a certain degree, he seemed to include his companion. He looked as if he wondered what there could be found to laugh at. Perhaps, that anything could ever be found to laugh at — certainly, as if he had never laughed in his life; and there ran a tradition, I believe, in the family, that he never had.

The young lady seemed to observe, at last, that she was the only merry person in the box; so gathering herself up with a look of assumed gravity, like a child that must be good, which the ready dimples at the corners of a mouth disclaimed, and the sweet merriment of eyes that would laugh, rendered irresistibly delightful, she sat quiet. But all this charming variety was lost upon every one but Armand — the dark young man evidently did not enter into it. He seemed not given to enjoy mirth himself, or like it in others.

And now that scene passes away.

And the second act of "Orfeo" is performed.

That simple and most beautiful air, which once heard

can never be forgotten, is sung by Melico, with a delicious sweetness that defies description — and Euridice is lost; and all the anguish of the bereaved one expressed; and eyes that a little before were brilliant with suppressed gaiety are streaming with tears; and she is sobbing and weeping, and drying her eyes with her handkerchief, and weeping and sobbing again like a baby.

And the chaperon heeds not, and the dark young man understands not.

He looks not sympathizing but wondering — wondering as one does at some inexplicable phenomenon. The expression of his face seems to say — what on earth can there be to cry about in a painted scene?

But the heart of Armand is thrilling through and through.

* * * * *

The curtain drops.

The magic scene is at an end.

From some unforeseen cause or other, there happened to be no ballet that night, so that the effect of the opera was not diminished when they rose to go.

The house was rapidly emptying. People were streaming down to the crush room. He knew nothing of crush rooms, and remained where he was.

How could he be better? All he did, was to creep a little nearer to the box, but not so as to lose his view of what was passing within.

He saw her rise. A cloak of the most charming tint of scarlet or crimson, with soft plush border of the same rich warm hue, was thrown over her white dress and pretty shoulders, and over it fell the volumes of curls of her fine hair.

Bewildered as he was, he was too much of a painter, even in that moment of strange excitement, to be insensible to the beauty of the effect of colour thus produced. But it did not signify — he only added his admiration as an artist to the new sentiment which moved him as a man. Painter or man, it was a sort of ecstasy to look upon her.

And the dark young man offered his arm; the lady having already quitted the box with her own companion. She put her slender, pretty white arm through his, as if it was a brother's that she took. Could it, after all, be only a brother?

Her ways were just like a sister's — but what were his? Those eyes that he fixed upon her were anything but a brother's.

But they are gone; and if he is to see her again, he must lose no time, for she will be coming out.

He hurried to the door of the Opera House, and planted himself just outside, to see her pass.

CHAPTER VII.

"Mysteries of mysteries,
Faintly-breathing Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
But beyond expression fair,
With thy floating nut-brown hair."

TENNYSON.

THE crowd was unusually great that night, and the hurry, noise, and confusion in proportion.

A large fashionable party was being given late, and people were hastening away from the Opera to attend it. Footmen in gaudy liveries, according to the fashion of the day, were rushing about, shouting, calling up carriages. Horses were rearing and prancing; coachmen swearing, and cutting at each other, as wheels got entangled, and poles smashed against panels. The hubbub and confusion being increased by the unsteadiness and uncertainty of the lights, which at that time were only furnished by the casual flashes from flambeaux, or the glimmering lanthorns of the link-boys, running about here and there.

Armand kept his place, taking a strange pleasure in the scene; watching party after party of gaily-dressed women, who, attended by men almost as brilliant in their attire as themselves, followed each other out, and were thrown rather than placed by their cavaliers in their coaches, the doors of which are hurriedly

banged to; footmen, two or three at once, spring up behind; and the horses dashing forward accompanied by the running footmen with their flaming flambeaux, off goes the brilliant equipage.

Jostled, hustled, pushed on one side or the other, still Armand kept his ground. Amused in spite of the preoccupation of his mind by the bustle of the scene, and interested by the various effects of this dazzling confusion of forms and colours, and the flashes of light which broke the darkness, as flambeaux after flambeaux glanced by, exhibiting, for a moment, the passionate struggles of the restless and impatient steeds; the gorgeous panels of the carriages, with their elaborate mantled coats of arms; the stately hammer-cloths in all their dignity, where sat the pompous coachman, in his grave periwig and three-cornered hat; whilst footmen, in liveries of every colour of the rainbow, and covered with gold or silver lace, their heads powdered white as snow, and adorned with tiers of sausage curls, hung in twos, threes, and even fours, upon the foot-boards.

Many were the bright, beautiful creatures that hurried past him; many the cavaliers, in coats of silk or velvet of the gayest colours, diamond solitaires, and shoe buckles; and the eye of the young man, accustomed to the sober hue adopted in the dress of those with whom he was best acquainted, was, as it were, fascinated by this splendid and ever-changing variety.

Party after party thus passed by. But the party

whose exit he was resolved to witness, be the pushings and pommellings what they might, came not.

At last he saw the beautiful face of the lady appear amid the press. She was leaning upon the arm of the gentleman who had attended her during the evening, and laughing and struggling, was making her way as best she could, uttering sundry rather coquettish shrieks and exclamations; whilst he, with the utmost devotion of manner, was endeavouring to make a way for her; in which his height, his activity, and his evident usage in such matters, assisted him very much.

They passed, and the crowd closed after them, and it was perhaps a minute or two before the young girl who belonged to the party appeared.

She was clinging to the arm of the young man who had attended her out of the box, looking very red and hurried. And he, anything in the world rather than a good pioneer in such places. They were struggling along as well as they could; she, every now and then, almost pulled off his arm by the press, and he blundering on, and bidding her mind, and hold fast, in tones so angry and impatient, as proved that to take care of one was as much as he was up to in crowds of this description; and that he was rather bothered than pleased by having the present charge in hand.

And so struggling, and the young thing looking excessively frightened, and half-suffocated, they at last

made their way to the steps outside the door, passing close by the place where Armand was standing.

A powdered footman forces his way to them, and informs the young man, that it is impossible for his lady's coach to draw up; but that she has made her way between the carriages, and begs they will try to do the same, for that she is in the greatest possible haste to be gone.

Armand observed the young man glance doubtfully and hesitatingly at his companion.

"Oh dear! oh dear! we can't! It's impossible! we can't! I dare not!"

"Oh, yes, miss; if Mr. — —," he lost the name, "will please to follow me. Quite safe. This way, sir, please. My lady says she can't wait."

And the footman precedes them in the perilous attempt, ducking under the pole of the next carriage; and is followed in a sort of nervous, awkward manner by the young gentleman, and by his evidently much terrified and reluctant charge.

She glanced back; she glanced up. Her eye caught that of Armand. He thought she coloured. Be that as it might, there seemed a sort of mute appeal in it. He pressed after her. They are in the midst of a confusion of carriages. Horses, looking spectral by the changing and uncertain lights, are rearing; poles and wheels passing and entangling.

Suddenly there is a rush — and a crowd, frantic

with terror, is tearing down before a carriage in which a pair of horses, who have taken fright, are furiously dashing down the street.

He never could distinctly remember how it all happened. All he could ever recollect was, an indistinct vision of shrieking women, bewildered link-boys, running and shouting; horses prancing and tearing; a white figure falling before a furious steed, and himself, like one frantic, passionately pushing back the horse with one hand, and with the other dragging her from the ground.

His distracted cries for help were heard even in the midst of the disorder. Such agony makes itself felt even in the uttermost confusion. People crowded to his help — like shadows he recollects them. — Some holding back horses; others forcing aside the poles of carriages. One thing alone is neither like a shadow nor vision. He holds her in his arms against his heart; and struggling desperately with his burden, finds himself panting for breath in one of the narrow adjoining streets.

The street was perfectly dark, except when a gleam was thrown into it from the lights of a passing carriage, for there were no permanent lamps in London then.

He was breathless and exhausted. She lay insensible in his arms. He sank down upon a door-step in this obscure street, still holding her; but she moved not.

He gazed upon her face as a sudden flash of light gleamed upon it. Ah! how beautiful, but how pale!

A few minutes — he knew not how many — elapsed before he had recollected himself sufficiently even to reflect upon the strange perplexity of his situation.

Had she been seriously hurt? Had she been trampled upon, or suffocated? There was no external appearance of injury. Her garments were scarcely soiled; her lovely hair still flowed but little dishevelled over the unstained whiteness of her muslin dress. As thus she lay in his arms, pale as death, and with the tender hue of the fading primrose round her eyes... Surely never anything earthly looked like this! Was she living? or had she received some fatal, though unseen injury? and was it but a lifeless marble that he held?

The distress which, as he recovered recollection, began now to usurp the place of every other feeling, was most painfully increased by the utter darkness in which he found himself, as the last carriages rolled away, and obscurity and silence succeeded.

People who have lived all their lives in lamplighted streets, and to whom a state of things such as then was universal, would appear almost as contrary to possibility as an extinguished sun, can form little idea of what a wilderness a large unlighted city is. How awfully desolate it appears! Not only awful, but actually dangerous. People have been stopped and robbed, nay murdered, in the very streets, that by daylight were among the most

frequented — Albemarle Street, the Haymarket, for instance.

Armand had no fears of this nature, but his perplexity was insupportable. What could he do? Was ever situation like his?

But help was near.

A small, twinkling light was seen advancing. Armand hailed it; and a man, carrying a link, came up.

He was a strong, brawny, rough-looking fellow, such as at that time used to frequent the doors of theatres, to light such of the company coming out into the darkness, as had not servants of their own to do it.

"Why, what have we got here?" he cried, as he stopped when hailed; "be that your sister, young sir? An odd time of night to be carrying a babby about the streets."

"The young lady has narrowly escaped being trampled to death. I am afraid she is very much hurt. See! see! stand a little back — give her air, and hold your light so — that's a good fellow. She's coming to herself."

The eyelids began languidly to uncloset, a heavy sigh, an effort to spring up and look round, a faint cry, and then she fainted away again.

"Why, this is an odd business, young master," said the Borachio, who luckily was not a bad sort of fellow, in spite of his coarse features, matted locks, and untrimmed beard. "Be that young lady your sister?"

"To be sure, or how should I have the care of her?"

"And mighty good care you seem to have taken of her. Why she's been trampled to death — under the horses' feet, I take it; but you're but a lad yourself, to have the charge of such. No, no, you must not raise her head; she's not dead, only in a faint. Keep her quiet a bit — she'll come round. Lor! but she *is* a pretty creature, ain't she? and so for that matter be you — babes in the wood — all alone in London great town. Poor creatures! but ye'd be worse off, to my mind, than them babes; only ye've met with a robin, as will do better than cover ye with strawberry leaves. Patience, patience, she's a coming round — or would I be a talking of strawberry leaves and robins? Ay, but ain't she a pretty creature? and ain't they as like as two peas, bless 'em?

"Well, Missy, are you better? don't be scared — here's your brother close by. She's coming round — bide a bit, she'll all be right; and now, what had you best do, think you? for you're sadly to seek, to my mind, in this bad town at this time o' night, sitting here all alone on the door step; and the coaches will all be gone off the stands, I am afraid. It's a mercy of my link.

"Yes, yes, look up, my pretty lass; don't be frightened now, and go off again; there's your brother has you safe, and as for me, I'm a rough one to look on, sure and certain; but would I hurt a hair of your head? Why, I've got three little childer at home, bless you."

But suddenly opening her eyes, she gave one wild,

agonised stare into Armand's face, and uttering a loud shriek, endeavoured to spring up. She could not; she sank down upon the step again.

"Don't now, don't now," went on the good-natured link-man, as Armand vainly endeavoured to soothe her.

"Surely now ain't it your own brother? don't you see?"

"My brother! my brother!" with a fresh scream of terror. "My brother! oh no, no, no. Where am I? where am I?"

"Why, not in a very comfortable place, for sure, seeing it's hard lying on the flags of the doorstep, and it past midnight; but don't take on so — you've got your brother with you, and we'll manage to get you safe home, now you're come to yourself.

"Where is it, sir?" turning to Armand, who was by this time dreadfully agitated, not daring to speak, lest he should alarm the young girl still more, and provoke some exclamation which might enlighten the good link-man as to the real state of the case — a thing he was most anxious to avoid.

"Where is it?" replied Armand; "tell him, sister. Where will you go? What . . ."

"Am I dreaming?" she cried, trying again to start up; but sinking down again, for her brain was whirling; "who? what? where am I? Oh, good heaven! good heaven! what is all this? Where am I? where am I?" looking round upon the lofty houses, now all shut up,

not a light glancing from a single window, and only made dimly visible by the flickering of the link-light.

"Why, miss, don't take on so. You're at the corner of the Haymarket, and how you got here goodness knows; but I doubt you've been near trampled to death. But don't take on; for here's your brother close by. So don't be so frightened."

But she looked strangely at him, and then uttering a second cry, again endeavoured to spring up. She fell down a third time, and fainted away again.

"She's not rightly come to herself," said the link-lighter, compassionately; "you'd best let me go and knock up a coach, and get her home. She's but a light little thing, though; and if as how your house is near, I think I could carry her in my arms, if as how she wouldn't be too scared to let me — I'm such a rough-looking 'un."

"My father's house is a couple of miles at least from this; it is in the neighbourhood of Spital Fields," said Armand. "We must hire a coach, and carry her thither — can you get one?"

"Why, I reckon they're all off their stands by this time, but a body might knock one up; shall I go to the next place, where I know some of 'em put up?"

"Pray do — it is the only thing."

"You stay here then; I'll make all the haste I can."

"You must leave me your light."

"Nay, but how then am I to find my way through the streets? for it is black as pitch."

"But you must not leave me so."

"As you like, but I think there's no time to lose."

"Hark! it's striking one at St. Martin's. You bide here; it's but a little way to go. I know a fellow lives back of St. Martin's Lane; I'll get a coach there."

"Wait till she comes to herself, at least."

"She'll never come to herself, I think; we must get her to a doctor."

But she began to move.

He raised her up, speaking to her in the gentlest of tones.

"Don't be so terrified, pray don't; you are perfectly safe. I would defend you with my life's blood, if need were. Do you not feel that I would? but there is no danger; this is a worthy fellow; we must let him take the light. He will find us a coach, and you will be carried safe home. Pray don't tremble so. I swear by all that is sacred, you are as safe as in your mother's arms."

At this the poor trembling creature looked up again into Armand's face; something seemed to encourage her in it. She gazed a few moments wistfully at him; then cast a bewildered look round her, and burst into tears.

"Let her cry, let her cry," said the good-hearted link-bearer; "it'll help her. Now be a good girl, will ye — and stay quietly, while I take the link, and get

you a coach. It's not far, and I'll soon be back, and nobody 'll harm you. Hark! there's th' old watchman coming on his beat. You stay where you are, and I'll bid him bring his lanthorn, and have an eye to you till I come back. I won't be long; and I'll get a coach, and take you safe to your mother, poor lamb!"

"Mother! brother! Am I dreaming?"

"Something very like it, my pretty lady; but here's its brother close by; don't be scared out of your wits like. Why *do* not you say something, Master?" to Armand, who was speechless from distress and embarrassment.

"Will you trust yourself with me, whilst that good man goes for a coach, to carry you home? See, the watchman is coming down the street; he will stay by us till this good fellow returns."

"Where am I? where am I? — dreaming? dreaming? Oh! that I could wake! Where am I? Oh! oh!"

She seemed to be actually as she imagined herself: struggling with the oppression of some horrid night-mare.

"You are awake," said Armand, gently; "you have been very nearly trampled to death under the horses' feet, but you are quite safe. Let this good fellow get a coach, and we will take you safely home. Go now," said he to the man, "and come back as soon as possible." For the watchman now came up.

The man departed. As soon as he was out of hearing, Armand said —

"He thinks I am your brother; and it is better that

he should. Don't tremble so; for these next few quarters of an hour, imagine me your brother. I will soon take you safely to your mother. Trust me — trust me — I beg of you. Do you think I would hurt a hair of your head? — Heaven strike me dead upon this stone first."

The tone and look seemed to reassure her a little, but she was still "far wide;" her brain appeared to have received a shock, which it could not recover. In vain he anxiously questioned her, as to her home — her father's house — her mother.

"No mother — no mother!" was all he could get out of her. It was impossible to rouse her from the state in which she was, or get anything the least like a rational answer to the inquiries he kept pressing upon her.

She only replied in incoherent sentences, passing her hands from time to time across her brow, as if endeavouring to recover her recollection — but in vain. His questions seemed only to increase the confusion of her thoughts. At last he ceased, and determined to wait the return of the link-man with a carriage, carry her home to his own mother, and endeavour in the morning to make out her friends.

So he sat supporting her on the steps as well as he could, and soothing her by repeating the words "home — home."

At last a coach was heard rumbling down the street,

the faint glimmer of the link light appeared again, and soon the carriage stopped where they were.

"There is the coach," said Armand; "let me put you into it."

"I want home — am I going home?"

"Yes, my pretty lady. She's quite mazed-like still," said the link-lighter; "get her to her mother, sir — and a doctor to her; she's got a something — I forget what they call it — cushion of the brain, I think; I once knew a lad fall from a scaffold like, and he'd a cushion of the brain, and he died next day, poor fellow! You must lift her up. Ay, in that way — keep her as quiet as you can — but them coaches *do* rattle so."

"Thank you, that will do," as he having first entered the carriage, received her from the hands of the good fellow, and placing his arm round her, laid her head tenderly upon his shoulder. "Thank you very much," giving him money.

"But, master," said the man, "you're not a going to get rid of me in this fashion. I've taken quite a fancy to you both, 'specially to that pretty sister of yours; and some way, I sha'n't sleep to night if I don't know as how she has got safe home — so, by your leave, I'll just get on the box with Jarvey here, and then I shall be ready to help you to heave her out when you get to your own door, for I reckon most of your folks will be gone to bed."

"By all means," said Armand, feeling a kind of relief

to have the responsibility in some degree divided, and a certain propriety in the attendance of this rude chaperon, even though only upon the coach-box.

And so, giving the direction to his father's house, they started without farther preamble, for the slight motion of lifting her into the carriage, seemed to have deprived her again of sensibility, and she lay without resistance supported by Armand. From time to time she uttered faint cries and ejaculations, opening her eyes, looking round, then closing them and relapsing into insensibility; at others she struggled painfully.

As for him, his feelings were singular indeed.

He was very young. It was the first time in his life that he had experienced anything like what he now felt. It was the awakening of the heart, and under circumstances to him the most touching.

Her helpless dependence — her faint cries — her bewildered accents — the slight, delicate, girlish form — the childlike face, the abundance of soft hair tumbling about all in disorder — those slender, girlish arms, so frail and delicate, like the first tender shoots of a young vine!

It seemed to him as if his arm which supported her, was the shrine of something more holy, sacred, and precious, than creation had ever presented before, as thus he made, as best he could, a cradle round her to soften as far as possible the rough jolting of the carriage.

And never did saintly image inspire more deep, more intense devotion.

To be allowed thus to hold this pure, this most lovely image of all dear and sacred upon earth!

His heart beat with a calm solemn feeling, that pervaded and ennobled his whole being. — That he was in a species of ecstasy was most true — but it was the ecstasy of the pure and angel heart, in the first dawn and paradise of love.

Forgive the extravagance of expression in which I indulge, but the subject runs away with me. A young man's first love is indeed a holy, and most lovely thing; in its passionate respect — its shy and trembling tenderness — its wild poetry of beauty.

He felt it all. He was most truly formed to feel it in its full force and purity.

And so he knelt and gazed, as he supported her, looking down upon that white young face:

“Even such a look as the mother ostrich fixes on her young,
Till that intense affection wakens the breath of life.”

Steele says, speaking of a young lady, “Only to love her, was in itself a liberal education.”

It might be said of Armand, only to love her had called to life every power which lay dormant within him, till then unknown and unperceived.

But the coach, after having jumbled along for something more than an hour, stopped before Du Chastel's door. She had fallen at length into what seemed a deep

sleep, and he was most anxious not to disturb her. When the coach stopped she moved a little and sighed faintly, but fell as it were to sleep again.

The door of the house was opened by Ambrose, looking as cross as an old faithful, rather spoiled servant thinks himself entitled to do, when he has been kept out of his bed till two o'clock in the morning, waiting for young master, who ought to have been home at ten.

He stood at the entrance holding it open, and frowning awfully, but would not condescend to come down the steps or open the door of the coach.

"Tell him to come here," said Armand to the linkman, who had descended.

"You must come and help the young gentleman, sir, if you please. His sister's lying in dead faint there i'the coach."

"Sister! What do you mean? Sister! he ha'n't sure got a woman there in the coach?"

"Woman! what are you talking of? No; a pretty young girl, and his sister. What is the man dreaming of?"

But the ill-humour of Ambrose was not proof any longer against his curiosity; he was soon hobbling down the steps.

"Madame has been in a pretty pucker, you may be sure," he reproachfully began; "you'll go hard to kill her, if you give her many such evenings as this; — but mercy on us! what have we got here?"

"Silence! speak softly — help me to carry her into the house. She seems asleep, but I am afraid she is very ill."

"What *have* you got here? What *can* you have brought home? — but bless me, she does look very ill and, poor innocent! it is but a child, after all. Master Armand, how *could* you come by her?"

The good link-man began to look very uneasy.

"I thought it was his sister. Isn't it his sister? — I thought it was his sister," he kept repeating, anxiously.

But nobody appeared to regard him.

"Where are you taking her to? Whose house is this? I thought it was his sister! sir! young man!" pushing forward, as, assisted by Ambrose, Armand was preparing to carry in the still sleeping girl up the steps. "Whose house is this? Sir! you shan't, you mustn't" — growing more earnest and imperative, as he found himself the less attended to.

Armand turned round with a smile, that would have reassured suspicion itself.

"The house is Mr. Du Chastel's," he said, "the great master-weaver, in Spital Fields — Who does not know him? Don't hinder us — she is very ill — but she is safe here — it is my father's house. But you are a good honest fellow — come in, if you like."

And so, as a mother carries a dying infant, or as a miser his most precious treasure, or as the humblest of devotees his most revered saint, assisted by Ambrose

— or rather followed, for she being so light he wanted no help — he carried his beauteous burden up stairs, and laid her on his mother's couch in the drawing-room, the good link-man steadily making his way after him.

The air of the house, the venerable, stern old servant man — above all, the aspect so severe, yet so handsome, of that drawing-room, had already almost re-assured him. He came up to Armand with a countenance in which goodness, respect, and satisfaction, were mingled, and said, —

“If you please, sir, I think as how I had best go fetch a doctor?”

“Thank you, by all means — go to Dr. Douglas; he lives only five doors off, in this row — the left-hand side as you go out.”

And the good fellow, much relieved, though sadly puzzled to make out how it all was — hurried away.

He had laid her upon his mother's couch, — her fair head bent like a drooping lily — common, but never-exhausted comparison — had fallen upon her small delicate shoulder, the cheek was ashy pale, the eyes heavily dim, her slender arms hung helpless down. She was not dead — but this was something more than a sleep.

“My father! Call my father, Ambrose — what are you hesitating about? Not my mother — but my

mother's maid, old Marguerite — the young lady is very ill."

"Young lady!" muttered the old man; "and where in the world did you pick her up? Your mother will think these queer doings. Never saw such a thing in this house, boy or man, before; but the world's all topsy turvy, now-a-days, I think."

"Call my father, I say."

But Du Chastel was already entering the room — he did not desire to exercise too close an inquisition over his son's proceedings, still less did he distrust him; and last of all, would he have wished Armand to feel that he was either distrusted or watched: but Du Chastel was an anxious parent; and someway, when Armand was abroad, he was always to be found sitting reading in his dressing-room, till he heard his son return. This night the young man had been most unusually late; and Du Chastel had intended to deviate from his ordinary practice, and to make some little enquiry as he came up to his room; but Armand stopped, as we have seen, in the drawing-room. Du Chastel listened a short time, then came down.

"What have we here?" was his exclamation at the scene which presented itself. A young girl extended, apparently asleep, upon the sofa — his son kneeling by her side, watching her with intense anxiety.

Armand turned half round.

"Oh, father!"

All was right; the "Oh, father!" the perfect confidence with which the appeal to his sympathy and assistance was made, was enough.

"An accident?" he asked. "Who is she?"

"I don't in the least know. Yes, an accident. Is she in danger, do you think? — this sleep seems most unnatural."

"Poor young creature!"

"She is not very ill? She is not in danger?"

"Have you sent for Dr. Douglas?"

"Yes."

"Keep her quiet till he comes. Do not tell me how it happened just at present," as Armand was about to speak. "Keep all quiet till we know how it will be with her. What a lovely creature! Ah! poor young thing! some father's and mother's heart is just now in sore travail about thee."

But the doctor soon appeared, and with him the link-man, who, in spite of all Ambrose could urge, would make his way up stairs.

"Let me, let me," he said, sturdily; "she's half my find, and I *shall* see how it goes with her."

The physician pronounced the patient to be in a most dangerous state. There had been a slight concussion of the brain. Perfect quiet was indispensable. She must be undressed and laid upon a bed, with as little disturbance as possible. The doctor looked round

with some anxiety — there was nobody but Marguerite, and Marguerite was no very gentle hand.

“Be quiet, be quiet,” he said. “No, no, Armand, you must not disturb your mother; besides, she is too helpless herself to be of any use. I will send to my sister — she’ll come and do it for us; we must not move her till then. Anne will do it all for us.”

He sat down and wrote a note, and dispatched it by the link-man, who had still remained hovering anxiously near the drawing-room door, with a certain instinctive modesty in contradiction of his rough exterior, afraid to intrude, yet feeling that he had a sort of right as well as a great desire to see the end of it.

Armand knew Anne Douglas well; and she knew him well, and they loved each other dearly. This plain woman — for her face was what the French call thoroughly *disgracié* — by nature or accident — yet gifted, or, shall we say, cursed — Oh, no! — with a heart overflowing with the softest and tenderest affections, had early attached herself to the little boy, when Armand, a motherless child, forlorn and solitary, in his great uncle’s house, would have been well nigh shipwrecked, if it had not been for the gentle cares of this most kind and generous-hearted woman.

CHAPTER VIII.

"My spirit, opening unconsciously,
Doth feel the harmonies around me now."

JOHN EDMUND READE.

ANNE DUGLAS entered the room, with one of the most astonishing edifices in the way of night-caps upon her head that ever was seen upon woman, under which her face, disfigured with the small-pox, and without the slightest redeeming circumstance, but that of a skin of inexpressible delicacy, peeped forth among frills and bows.

She had dressed herself hastily, and thrown on as a surtout, a white dressing, or, as they were then called, bed gown of dimity, and over that a large square shawl; but there was that in her every gesture and expression, and more especially in her tone of voice, that won respect and interest at the first moment.

Armand hastened to her as soon as she opened the door. He loved her, confided in her, rested on this most indulgent and affectionate of female friends — more almost to him than mother — if it be possible for any one to be more to a man than his mother; but Armand's mother, as we have seen, wanted the right touch and sympathy — in a certain sense she was no mother.

"She was in danger of being trampled upon in the press of carriages — among the crowd at the door of the Opera House. She fell under the very feet of the horses.

I snatched her up and dragged her away. I can recollect nothing more; it is all confusion. The carriage for which she was making, dashed on, I think — but I can scarcely remember anything. I found myself at last, in one of the by-streets, and she insensible in my arms. She has not yet been able to return a rational answer — see how she lies.” Thus he ran on.

“What is the matter, brother?”

“A slight concussion of the brain; but extreme quiet and care will save her, I believe.”

“Must we move her to a bed?”

“On consideration, I would rather let her be. Can you contrive to undress her — that is to say, merely loose her sash and ligaments?”

“Strings!” smiling.

“Well, well, strings, then. Let her remain on this couch till she has been really asleep, and this unnatural drowsiness has subsided — she will do then.”

Anne Douglas only had to look up at Du Chastel.

“Of course — of course — I am extremely grateful to you for coming. Shall we leave her to you?”

“If you will be so good; and let one of your maids be called, and make a small fire — I shall sit up with her myself all night — and with the materials to make her a cup of tea when she awakens; she’ll want nothing more. Yes, dear Armand; trust her to me, I will take care of her, and we shall make out who she is in the morning.”

Still he lingered. He seemed as if he could not tear himself away. He stood gazing, gazing, with an expression on his countenance not to be mistaken — at least by Anne Douglas — I don't think any of the others perceived it.

"You must go," she said; "indeed you must."

"But will she live? Only assure me she will live."

"Yes, yes, she will live. See, the blueness about the lips and the general expression of distress are gradually subsiding. Pretty young creature! One may see in everything about her, that she has been some fond mother's pride and darling. Poor mother! what agonies she is in at this moment. Perhaps I may find some clue, so that we may send notice to her home immediately, that she is safe. One is so grieved for her poor mother!"

"She said she had no mother."

"For pity's sake don't keep whispering here. Go along, and let me look to the needful," said Anne, almost forcing him out of the room.

He went up stairs, and entered his beloved sanctum, consecrated by so many memories of fervent wishes, disappointed hopes, and honest purposes, and hung round with all those various expressions of thought, either by himself or others, which seemed to him a sort of atmosphere in which to breathe freely, buried though he was in that remote corner of a crowded city, where he

lived. But what were all these imperfect images of imagination and feelings now? Nothing.

All seemed pale and faded, as if the light which gave them warmth and colour was altogether gone — extinguished, as is the flame of some poor candle, before the brightness of the sun.

A new sense — a sentiment unknown till now — something sweeter, dearer, holier, was possessing his soul, and throbbing with a feeling, how exquisite! in the pulses of his young, unhackneyed heart.

He did not attempt to lie down. He kept walking up and down his room, in a tumult, to his young inexperience, of inexplicable feelings. All he understood, was the ineffable charm which bound him to her; further than this he did not go. He thought not of consequences — of a future; the present was ecstasy, and it was all *one now*.

And so he paced up and down his room.

At last, he softly opened his door, and stole down stairs to listen outside the drawing-room. He thought he heard faint whispers from time to time. The good doctor must be there with his sister. This comforted him. He had the greatest faith in both. They would not let her die. No, she would not be suffered to die. A better faith than that in any earthly physician, seemed within, to assure him that she should not die. He who gave her, would not let her die. She was too precious, too lovely, thus to be lost.

And then he went up stairs again, and in doing so met his father.

"I was coming to your room, Armand. I knew you would not be asleep. I have, as yet, heard nothing of this strange affair: where you have been this night, or where you found this young creature. She has all the appearance of one too tenderly nurtured, to form one in an adventure like this; for if ever I saw purity and innocence written upon a face, it is upon her's."

"Father, will you come into my room for a moment?"

Du Chastel accepted the invitation, and sat down in the chair his son presented.

The young man remained standing.

"Father, I have done wrong, perhaps—but do not be alarmed. I have no very criminal confession to make. As I passed down the Haymarket to-night, I was seized with a sudden, almost invincible desire, to see for once what was inside a theatre — inside the Opera House more especially. I did not stop to consider whether you or my mother would approve of what I was doing, or perhaps I should never have gone in. It did not seem to me that there was any great harm in it."

"No great harm certainly in *it*," was all Du Chastel said.

"I should be sorry to pain my mother by offending her scruples; yet forgive me, sir, there is something within me which seems to refuse assent to those scruples

— a something which refuses obedience to opinions I cannot make my own.”

“I understand you. I regret that it is so; but the time has arrived, when such opinions will no longer govern even *us*, as they have hitherto done.”

Armand related how all had happened.

“What strange incidents occur in life,” was his father’s remark; “it is almost incredible, unaccountable — that a girl so surrounded and so guarded, could, under any circumstances, fall into such extreme and varied dangers. The extraordinary part of it is, that the loss was not instantly discovered, and that the carriage drove away without her. One must have perfect confidence in you, Armand,” he added, smiling, “to credit your story as I do; and I would advise you never to repeat it to unworthy ears, for it would inevitably be voted an ill-conceived and preposterous invention.”

“All passed in such confusion, that I can account for nothing,” was Armand’s reply. “I found her thrown upon me for protection, without the slightest clue to discover her friends. I thought the best thing was to bring her home to you and my mother. I do not know whether I did right or wrong.”

“I do not well see how you could have done better.”

“Yet the idea of what her friends must be suffering is most annoying.”

“But it is impossible to do anything to-night.”

"She will not be able to be moved to-morrow?" asked Armand, nervously.

His father glanced suddenly up — one glance was enough. Du Chastel remembered the days of his own youth. Sweet visions fled for a moment past. He gave one sigh of regret to the years which never return —

One sigh of satisfaction was added, as he looked at his son. In that faith which when well placed, truthful and strong, is the guiding star of a young man's destiny.

But he kept his thoughts to himself. He would not mar the first delicate unfolding of passion by his interference. He would not tear open that timidly-expanding bud, and deprive his son, in those first holy moments of bashful feeling, of the comfort of believing that a secret so precious was hidden from every eye.

He shook hands with him and went away. And Armand, who seemed to understand, and not to understand; faintly to perceive, and not to perceive his father's sympathy; loved him more warmly than ever, and returned to his own meditations.

* * * *

The morning broke upon him, and he had scarcely rested. He had passed the night in nervous, broken slumbers; every now and then, starting up and stealing down, to listen at the drawing-room door. Long the

faint whisperings might be heard; at last there was silence, only interrupted by a very audible snore.

Armand recognised it for the good doctor's. It was thus he had seen him once or twice fall asleep by the bed-side of a patient, when his anxiety had been relieved by a change for the better — so he knew by this symptom that all must be going on well; and ascending the stairs with a lighter heart, relieved from the most pressing of his anxieties, he threw himself, dressed as he was, on his bed, and fell soundly asleep.

The beams of the early sun played upon his face and wakened him. He sprung up, opened his door, and listened. All in the house was profoundly still, though it was not earlier than people were usually stirring; but the disturbance of the preceding night had kept everybody late.

Once more down stairs he crept; but the doctor was still snoring, so he again went back, and waited with all the impatience of a foolish child, to whom time appears actually to stand still, until at last people began to stir.

Then he suddenly bethought himself what a wretched figure he should make after his night's watching, and he began in haste to re-dress; but all was done in a most hurried manner, so impatient was he to get down. His fingers trembled so with haste, that he could hardly manage them.

As he left his room, he met his father on the land-

ing. Du Chastel looked at him and smiled, and thought that Rosalind might be sometimes mistaken in her symptoms of true love. Armand made anything rather than the neglected appearance she attributes to the lover.

The drawing-room door was just being gently opened as they reached the foot of the stairs, and the doctor, with a stealing, cat's pace, his boots all the time creaking in the most provoking manner, came out, looking more than usually authoritative as regarded that silence, which he always required to be observed in his sick rooms.

"Hist — hist! don't be so impatient," whispered he, in reply to the anxiously enquiring looks of the young man, who pressed forward to meet him, but did not speak. "She'll live — everybody always does live. — Nobody dies — not one in a hundred. — People make such a fuss with their terrors. — I tell you nobody dies — not one in a thousand; and I'll be bound you young gentleman — simpleton, I mean — have been fidgeting yourself out of your senses all night; and my good friend, your father, has been ill enough at ease, I warrant. Pooh — pooh! only keep people quiet, and nobody dies. The worst is, they will make a fuss, and don't keep people quiet."

He indulged the impatience of the young man, however, by opening the door about a quarter of an inch, so that Armand could just see the couch, and Anne Douglas

sitting by it. More than that, strain his eyes as he would, it was impossible to distinguish.

"I wish to speak with you, doctor," said Du Chastel; and the doctor went out, most provokingly shutting the door after him, and shewing by his manner that nobody was to presume to open it.

"Is she better?" began Du Chastel; whilst Armand, leaning against the banister, in silence devoured every word that was said.

"Yes — yes, she'll do now; but it's been a near thing. Very strange story, now isn't it? Who could be such a fool and blockhead as to have the care of her and let her fall? Can't understand it in the least!"

"Has she recovered her recollection? Can she tell us where to send to her friends?"

"Why, she has — and she has not. She is still confused — but I think she was a little daunted at the sight of me. Best leave her to Anne — everybody tells everything to Anne."

The poor young girl did in truth look sadly scared and bewildered, when she awoke from her heavy sleep to a perception of where she was. She stared round her with a wild look of terror; but her eyes fell upon the face of Anne Douglas, and the terror subsided as by a charm.

"Where am I? and what has happened?" she again asked.

"You are among friends, deeply anxious to restore

you to your own. You can tell me now where they are to be found. Your poor mother! she will be very anxious about you. Just give me her address, and we will send to her instantly; and then set your mind at ease, and lie quiet till she comes."

"My mother!" and the colour flew to her face —
"I have no mother."

"Your friends — your father then."

"My father is not in town. It's my aunt."

"Whoever it is, she will be miserable till you are found."

"Yes — I suppose so."

"And where must we send?"

"To twenty-five, Lower Grosvenor Street."

"And your aunt's name is —"

"Mrs. Fitzroy."

Accordingly to Mrs. Fitzroy, Lower Grosvenor Street, a messenger was immediately sent.

* * * * *

There was a back-drawing room in Du Chastel's house, which did not, according to the fashion of more modern times, open by folding-doors into the front one. Here the party, exiled from the front room, took refuge. A couch was arranged for Claire, and the father and son breakfasted with her.

Du Chastel was gone to his counting-house; but Armand lingered after him; for, in truth, he found it impossible to tear himself away.

His mother, indeed, made very nervous by the idea of receiving a stranger lady all alone, had begged of him not to leave her.

So he sat down by the fire, and took up a book, and pretended to read; but if you had looked over his shoulder, you would have found that the book was upside down.

It was almost as soon as it well could be after the time had elapsed that was required for a messenger to reach the neighbourhood of Grosvenor Square, that a carriage drove rapidly up to the door. Not, however, with that head-long haste that marks a mother flying to her rescued child; but still with proper rapidity.

The knocker had been tied up, so that the thundering announcement which would otherwise have duly signified the importance of her who was about to come up stairs, had been prevented.

Yet there was a bustle in the hall, quite unusual in that sober house, and Ambrose looked very cross and rather frightened, as he half-opened the back drawing-room door, and in his usual unceremonious manner, announced Mrs. Fitzroy.

The lady entered, accompanied by a young man; and Armand recognized at once the inhabitant of the opera box of the preceding evening.

The beauty which distinguished Mrs. Fitzroy was little diminished by the terrible inquisition of day-light,

though her age was approaching to that period when daylight is apt to reveal very unpleasant truths.

She was exceedingly fair. Her features were delicate and beautiful; her eyes of a lovely blue, beamed with a most persuasive sweetness. There was an air of innocence difficult to describe pervading her countenance, which even at the more advanced age she had attained, gave it an irresistible charm.

All that was left to desire in this perfection of face and form was, that the figure should have been a little less full. Yet this very defect — if defect it were — set off by the rare delicacy of her complexion, seemed only to render her whole appearance more soft and winning. In enumerating her perfections, movements the most graceful, and a voice of music, should not be forgotten.

A strange contrast to all this softness and loveliness was presented by the young man who followed her. His appearance I have already described; and I cannot say that further acquaintance diminished the unpleasing, not to say repulsive character of his hard countenance.

As now seen, his figure looked short, thick and heavy; his forehead, it is true, was splendidly developed; but the brow was ponderous and lowering; overshadowing eyes, deep set, and of the darkest black. These eyes, when at rest, were cold, passionless, and thoughtful, yet burning with a sort of deep, concentrated fire;

but when excited, they flashed with an almost unearthly brightness. The features were coarse and ill cast; the complexion dark and sallow; the hair harsh, and the colour of the raven; the mouth — that feature in which we read, or fancy we read, the characters of the heart — was thick-lipped and coarse, yet nevertheless had a strange union of strength, and a kind of bitter sweetness in it.

The gestures and motions of this remarkable being were as inconsistent as the rest of his appearance; a nervous awkwardness being combined with that sort of self-assertion, which arises from conscious strength. Shyness and timidity alternated with a blunt abruptness almost amounting to brutality of manner.

We were little prejudiced in his favour when we saw him at the Opera; he appears to much greater disadvantage this morning.

CHAPTER IX.

"In stern mountain forms repellent, in rock strength that mocks control,
Dwells a spirit and a feeling, that doth concentrate the soul."

JOHN EDMUND READE.

CLAIRE half rose from her couch to greet Mrs. Fitzroy, but sank back again, in a spasm of nervous oppression. It was terrible work for her to receive a perfect stranger — but Mrs. Fitzroy's manner soon set her at ease.

"My mother is an invalid," Armand had said; "excuse her rising."

And Mrs. Fitzroy had swam rather than walked to the sofa, so smooth and undulating was her gait, and taking Madame Du Chastel's hand, had expressed her thanks in a manner which savoured, as Armand thought, more of politeness, dashed with a good deal of hauteur, rather than of softer feeling — indeed, of any feeling there was not much evidence — but then, everything was so gracefully done and uttered.

It was very different with her companion.

The dark, heavy-featured face was working strongly.

"I only wonder I am alive," was all he said, in reply to Armand's remark of how extremely he must have suffered.

"I cannot conceive how it all came about," young Du Chastel went on, for he felt, he could not divine why, attracted towards this repulsive-looking being; "but, thank heaven! all is right now; and we must try to forget last night."

A shudder, which might be said rather to convulse than pass through the frame of the other, was the only answer to this; the face was expressing at the same time exquisite pain.

Armand went on, endeavouring to relieve him, for he understood what he must be suffering.

"Your sister —"

Why did he say, "your sister?" He did not know it

was the young man's sister; but it seemed as if he would have it so — force it to be so — they *should* be brother and sister.

"Your sister, they assure me, is going on as well as possible; all danger is over; quiet alone is necessary. My mother will have the pleasure of keeping the young lady prisoner for a few days. It will be a great happiness to us."

"She is not my sister," was the blunt reply; and the stranger relapsed into silence.

He did not, however, turn away; his eyes, glancing under those heavy lowering brows, fixed themselves upon Armand. There was a strange fascination in them; Armand felt uncomfortable — he knew not why.

The colloquy, however, if it would have proceeded further, which seemed doubtful, was broken into, by Madame Du Chastel requesting her son to inform Miss Douglas that Miss Fitzroy's aunt was waiting to see her.

Upon this, Armand left the room. The eyes of the young man followed him to the door, then a sort of unnatural sigh, more of a convulsion than a sigh it seemed, was uttered. And he turned to his mother, who addressed him with —

"You see, my dear Leonard, that you need not have made yourself so excessively wretched. I told you so all the time. Very bad accidents rarely happen, except in romances; things come right some way or other. Poor

fellow!" turning to Madame Du Chastel, "you cannot conceive how miserable he has been — he took so much blame to himself. It was in vain to tell him that, in accidents such as these, nobody ought to be blamed — such things *will* occur now and then; but some people love to indulge in such worlds of useless pain. You can have no idea what a night I have had with him."

But Leonard answered not.

He persevered in a silence which it was difficult to know whether to ascribe to obstinacy, shyness, or to feelings too deep for utterance. One glance he gave to his mother — for this lovely creature actually was his mother — then turned away, as if accustomed to find no sympathy either of thought or feeling there.

"Strange being!" muttered Mrs. Fitzroy, and then went on talking over the details of the accident with much apparent ease and indifference — though she was, in fact, anything but at ease or indifferent. On the contrary, she was excessively fidgetted and annoyed at what had happened, and most impatient to get her young charge safely home; so that this provoking and unfortunate business might, by some contrivance or other, be hushed up, and, so far as possible, remain a secret to the young lady's father.

"He is so unreasonable and violent," thought Mrs. Fitzroy to herself, "that if he once takes it into his head to be angry, there is no knowing what may come of it."

But it was her usual practice to hide every annoyance under a soft and polished manner.

But now the door opened, and, followed by young Du Chastel, Anne Douglas entered.

"Miss Douglas, my mother's friend, who has watched Miss Fitzroy through last night," said Armand, presenting the small, pale, plain, but interesting-looking woman to the splendid Mrs. Fitzroy.

"I thought, madam," began Anne Douglas, "I had better acquaint you myself with the state in which the young lady lies. It is still necessary that she should remain perfectly quiet. I could almost.....my brother could almost have begged that a few more hours.....another day and night, indeed — might elapse before she went through the little agitation of seeing even you. If you could trust her to my care a short time longer —"

But Mrs. Fitzroy had already risen from her chair.

"I am most impatient to see her. I am sure, dear madam, you will excuse me, but I *must* see her. I consider myself as standing in her mother's place. As for remaining here, I am sure you are excessively good; but I am most impatient to get her home."

Miss Douglas looked uneasy.

"It is natural that you should feel impatient, madam, to see her. I know not that I can venture to oppose it. Yet my brother, who has left the house but about a quarter of an hour ago, was very urgent with me upon

the subject. There was so much natural agitation excited when she heard that you were immediately expected, that he was of opinion if you could be persuaded to delay the interview until to-morrow morning, it would be better for all parties."

"Impossible! my dear madam — utterly impossible! Surely it can do her nothing but good to see *me* — and when I have come, too, for the express purpose of conveying her home! To go back without seeing her is not to be thought of!"

There was a slight touch of temper in the tone with which the last few words were uttered.

Anne Douglas looked as if she knew not exactly what to say. It seemed so natural that Mrs. Fitzroy should insist upon seeing her niece, that it was impossible, if she persisted, to oppose it. And yet the young lady, at mention of the interview, had looked as if it would not produce that soothing effect which, from the softness of Mrs. Fitzroy's manner, might have been anticipated.

Leonard had stood a silent, but not unobservant spectator of what was passing.

And as his mother was proceeding to cross the room for the purpose of seeing the patient, he started abruptly forward, and laying his dark sinewy hand upon that soft arm of hers, said —

"No! Not if it may hurt her —"

"Hurt her! Nonsense! — indeed," resuming her usual sweetness of tone and expression, and turning to

Anne Douglas — “you will excuse me, but I *must* see her.”

Still Anne hesitated.

“You think... I understood it to be your opinion — the medical man’s opinion — that to disturb her now might be injurious,” said Leonard Fitzroy.

“I fear so, indeed.”

“Then, mother, we will return again to-morrow morning.”

“How absurd you are!” said she, quite angrily, nature at last getting the better of conventional smoothness. Mrs. Fitzroy was one who never could brook opposition. “How absurd you are! Here have you been raving about all night like a wild wood-demon, rather than a man; and now, when she is close at hand, you don’t care to see her. But I *choose* to see her. It is new to me that young ladies should be too ill to receive their best friends. *I* can understand nothing of all this.”

She was preparing to leave the room.

But he put himself before her.

“No, mother, this must not be, *shall* not be,” he added, with decision.

“Well, well, of course it must be as you please,” was the reply, and to the astonishment of every one, Mrs. Fitzroy returned to her seat; and after making a few more inquiries from Anne Douglas, and having ascertained that it would really be much better to defer the

interview, at least for a few hours, she returned to her carriage followed by her son, and took her departure. He put her into the carriage, but he did not enter it: he shut to the door, and ordered the coachman to drive on.

But his mother interfered.

"You are not going home with me?"

"No, I shall stay here."

"Absurd! and what are these people to do with you, or you with them, I wonder? You do not intend to ask to see her when I am gone — that would be too excessively childish even for you. Promise me you will not. If she is kept quiet, I shall be able to move her much the sooner, and I am sure it will do her no good to see *you*."

His face darkened at this — he shook his head.

"Then you will promise me not to attempt it?"

He looked determined not to give this promise.

"Nay, nay, if that's it, I shall insist upon seeing her myself."

"Well, well, I promise."

"And how long do you intend to stay, bothering these good people here?"

"I must be at the Society's rooms, if possible, by two."

"To be sure. Well, promise me you will be a good boy, and I promise you we will have her safe at home again in much less time than you expect."

And so they, mother and son, parted.

Leonard Fitzroy re-entered Du Chastel's house.

But he did not immediately go up stairs; the door of a small library behind the dining-room was standing open; the apartment was unoccupied, and he went in.

He was endeavouring to master his agitation, but he shook and trembled so, that he could scarcely stand. He sat down, he leaned his face against the side of the book-case — his heart was throbbing violently. They were the subsiding throbs of one of those agonies of existence which he had been enduring for the last hours.

He was struggling hard to master his emotion, as he had struggled, and with better success, to conceal it.

The revulsion of feeling, from the extremity of distress to almost perfect security, was too much for him; for he was one made up of those contradictions in character which almost ensure a suffering life.

To leave the house at present seemed impossible, for she was in it; and yet he had promised not to attempt to see her. But he must hear more of her. Why had he suffered his mother to extort that promise from him? The patient might have been allowed to see *him*; it would have been a very different thing from seeing his mother.

He sat there till he grew calmer, and began to wish to go up stairs again and hear more; but then his old enemy, intense nervous shyness, which had vanished in a considerable degree before the horrible excitements

of the last few hours, began to torment him. He listened, and all was so perfectly still, that not the least sound was to be heard. He wanted courage to break it, and present himself unexpectedly. It was plain every one imagined he had departed with his mother. Oh! that the dear, gentle-looking Miss Douglas would come down!

There was something in her face which had already excited a feeling rare with him, for he lived almost like one forbid, an alien and a stranger among his fellow-creatures, so exceptional was his nature. He felt drawn to her he knew not why. If he could but see her again! And at this moment, through the half-opened door, he beheld her descending the stairs. She looked so gently and kindly, that it was impossible to be afraid of her.

She started and seemed surprised to find him still in the house.

"I beg your pardon," she said, approaching him, "but perhaps you are wanting something. Can I do anything for you?"

"I can't go away," he answered, bluntly.

"That is so natural — it is so painful," she replied, "to have a friend under circumstances like these, and not be allowed to see her. I was very sorry, but it is unwise to run risks."

"Ay, my mother! — You were quite right — but do you think" — hesitating — "do you think she would see me?"

"I do not know; indeed. Would you very much wish it? — Would you like me to try?"

"I feel as if I would give half my remaining existence to see her but for a moment — yet —"

"It may agitate her, you mean."

"No," gloomily, "I don't mean that; *I* — it won't agitate *her*, and it shall not agitate me. It would be kind of you to ask her whether she would like to see me — perhaps she might — I don't know — she has a great deal of good nature. She may not dislike to say that she forgives me the injury my stupid awkwardness has done her."

"She has just fallen into a doze, and must not be disturbed at present. When she awakens, I will let you know."

Anne Douglas felt much interested in this singular being; there was an instinctive sympathy in her for every one who suffered from intense feeling, and more especially from unreturned love.

"No, thank you. After all, I am under a promise not to attempt to see her till my mother returns; and besides, I am engaged elsewhere. Good morning."

He was going, but he suddenly stopped and turned back. It was only to stammer forth —

"We are deeply, deeply indebted to you."

And so he went away.

He took his way towards the west end of the town, through those narrow lanes, rather than streets, of Spital

Fields. He looked round with a mingled feeling of surprise and sympathy.

He was, of course, aware of the existence of this population, associated with so melancholy a story of human perversity; but, like most of the rest of the world, he had troubled himself little with the fate of the victims.

The picture of obscure and humble industry presented by the scene around him, at that time far more peculiar and characteristic than it is now, interested him much. But he had been yet more struck by the view, slight and passing as it had been, afforded by the interior of Du Chastel's house.

It was so unlike what he had been accustomed to.

The glare of ostentatious wealth, which surrounded him in his own family, was odious to him. He was of a deep reflective nature, that loved to dwell among the most abstracted recesses of scientific lore. One of those singular and exceptional intellects which appear to have been created to penetrate far into the hidden secrets of things, and employ itself in those speculations of the pure reason, so little acceptable to the ordinary run of mankind. For that he was born, and for little else.

Consider how, as child, boy, man, he must have found himself isolated among the showy, superficial people, by whom he was surrounded. What cared they for his peculiar gifts, the value of which they were quite incapable of understanding. To those who could

discern little beyond mere externals, he had appeared nothing better than an awkward, heavy, rather stupid boy; for, like many others possessing similar gifts, nature with these high endowments had united an exterior more than commonly deficient in every-day accomplishments.

The dung-hill cock when he found a gem, could scarcely be at a greater loss to know what to do with it, than were Leonard Fitzroy's parents with this remarkable boy.

After sundry endeavours upon the part of his mother to make him like other people, she abandoned the attempt, surrendering him, in utter despair, to the inspirations of one of the most remarkable intellects of his day.

This story reminds one of Ampère, with his amazing intellect, yet so dull as regarded common things; a helpless inaptitude, which at once excites the wonder and the contempt of triumphant mediocrity.

So he had lived, and his would have been a joyless existence enough, but for those gleams of exultation which attend the successful exertions of the intellect. And such gleams were rare. Long nights and days of painful exertion of thought, despondency, and wearisome, unassisted toil, would be passed before he could cry Eureka.

And even success gave but a momentary happiness. These gleams were like those of a frosty winter, shining yet cold.

Nobody sympathized, nobody cared, nobody knew — he had, as yet, no one with whom to share the triumph, for he still lived quite out of the scientific world, which was not then accessible as it is now. Yet, under this ungracious exterior there was a heart yearning for love — susceptible, passionate but that heart had been denied a voice. A strange and fatal dumbness, far worse than the mute and speechless tongue it is, when the countenance, the gesture, the very tone, conceal rather than transmit the feelings.

From a child he had felt that nobody loved him; and this belief seemed to have destroyed all natural piety. His father a mere man of expense, his mother now a widow, and a showy, fashionable elder brother, had become equally indifferent to him. Yet, feeling was not altogether extinguished, and only burnt with a greater intensity in one solitary instance.

The young girl of the Opera-box was his cousin; she was younger than he was by some four or five years — a large difference in childhood and early youth. She, like himself, had been a good deal left to her own guidance; her mother had died early, and her father, who valued her highly as the very beautiful heiress — for extremely beautiful she promised to be — of his fortunes, contented himself with spoiling her in every possible way, wherever they came in contact. This was not very frequently, for he was absorbed in the pursuits of wealth and ambition.

Of course, this idol, the source of so much pride and self-gratulation to a rich and coarse-natured father, ran a fair chance of being ruined, body and soul. The little girl was left to nurses and governesses, and the chapter of accidents — a chapter that sometimes marvellously befriends those who have no other friend, though woe to him who voluntarily exposes his child to it.

The little girl and Leonard Fitzroy being cousins, of course had met, though not very frequently — but it had been enough. His heart had fixed itself, and for ever. The attachment had begun when she was quite a little thing; it had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength, unobserved by any one.

And so this love of his had grown up the secret treasure of his existence. And silently and quietly, as leaf after leaf expands, had feeling after feeling unfolded and been strengthened by imperceptible degrees, till at length, with advancing years, a deeper and more passionate intensity of ripened love, hidden under all his apparent apathy, had begun to reveal its existence by deep, convulsive, startling throbs, which were little understood, even by himself, until the agony of the last night had done that which years, perhaps, of the usual peaceful devotion might not have effected; in the agony of his grief his heart had been revealed to him, and he knew that he loved her to distraction.

CHAPTER X.

THE fine lady had left everything unsettled; they did not know how soon she intended to return.

The patient dozed and slumbered, and her gentle nurse would not disturb her. So no questions were asked, and no further discoveries made.

Armand found it impossible to leave the house that morning. He kept hovering about the stairs and back drawing-room, beguiling the time by at intervals going up to his own snugery, and endeavouring to sketch from memory the figure of their guest — now as he watched her prattling at the Opera — now as she lay helpless before him.

His facility was remarkable, but he could not succeed to his own satisfaction. *That*, indeed, was impossible; the image in his fancy mocked his pencil.

So stole the tedious hours away, and still he was not allowed a glance at her; but Anne Douglas, who divined his feelings — alas! hers was the divination of cruel self-experience — endeavoured to comfort him with the assurance that the young lady would be well enough that evening to be carried up-stairs, and that he should lend a helping hand in the operation; adding, that she hoped she would be able to join the family party in the course of the following day.

So passed the morning.

Two — three — four — struck upon the neighbouring church clock.

A quarter past four — was there ever so tedious a day?

Half-past four; but the sound of a carriage thundering down the street is heard, and it stops at Du Chastel's garden-gate.

Ambrose opens the hall door, and in comes the lady. Mrs. Fitzroy was no longer accompanied by her son. In his place appeared a gentleman in black, looking extremely professional.

She is shewn up-stairs; and with her accustomed soft smile, but in a manner that will not be refused, enquires for Miss Douglas.

Madame Du Chastel, fatigued by the agitation of the preceding night and the morning's exertion, had already retired to her room.

Anne Douglas answers to the summons.

"My dear madam, how can I thank you sufficiently for your kind attentions to the dear child? but I am come with the hope to relieve you from further trouble. Dr. Armitage — Miss Douglas. He will examine your patient; and under the sanction of his authority, which I hope to obtain, I intend to carry her home."

Anne Douglas looked distressed.

Armand turned pale.

"Do you think it safe to move her so soon?" began Miss Douglas. "I beg ... Mr. Du Chastel will assure

you — that his family only esteem themselves privileged in being allowed to detain the young lady until she can be moved without the least risk. Indeed, you must allow me to say — I think it would be highly imprudent to expose her to the motion of a carriage at present."

On this, Armand thought himself bound to speak.

He came forward.

"My mother, I am certain, would be most distressed at the idea of the young lady being moved one hour before it can be done with perfect security. Dr. Douglas, I believe, still recommends absolute quiet."

Mrs. Fitzroy looked up at the very handsome young gentleman who addressed her. He was colouring, and looking more anxious than she thought there was any occasion for; and her resolution was strengthened. She was a far seeing woman, this Mrs. Fitzroy, in spite of her air of unsuspecting innocence.

"Thank you very much," she said, rather coldly. "Dr. Armitage will decide upon all that. Can we see my niece?" turning to Anne. "I am rather pressed for time."

"She is not asleep?" — enquired the Doctor.

"No, she has been dozing, but is now lying with her eyes open. She seems inclined to be very still."

"We will see the patient, then, if you please."

Miss Douglas could make no further opposition. The medical man and the lady entered the room together,

and alone. They did not seem to think it necessary that Miss Douglas should accompany them.

After about a quarter of an hour had elapsed, the door opened, and the Doctor came out.

"It is decided that the patient is quite in a fit state to be moved; and Mrs. Fitzroy is naturally most anxious to have her niece under her own care. Perhaps, madam, you will be kind enough to assist the lady in the little preparations which may be necessary for her departure; and with this young gentleman's assistance, I can insure the lifting her in perfect safety to the carriage."

Anne Douglas still hesitated.

"There is not the shadow of a cause for apprehension. I pledge my medical reputation upon getting her safely home," the Doctor replied authoritatively; "and Mrs. Fitzroy is naturally impatient that it should be done."

There was nothing for it but to obey; and Anne entered the sick-room.

The Doctor and Armand were left alone.

"Are you not afraid?" Armand broke out, bluntly enough, for he was too anxious for forms. "I understood, from the physician who was first called in, that it was of the utmost importance to keep her perfectly at rest for the present."

"I bow to his authority," said the young gentleman in black, looking half sarcastic, half inclined to be affronted; "or ought to bow, I should say; but it is not my practice to pay any *very* great attention to the

notions of medical gentlemen of the old school, and practising — excuse me — in somewhat obscure quarters of this town. With the advantages I have all along possessed, of communicating with the most eminent men of the age, I may be allowed, perhaps, to place some *leetle* reliance on my own judgment. I pronounce, that the young lady may be moved without the slightest danger; and Mrs. Fitzroy, her aunt, is very desirous that it should be done. I presume you will not refuse your assistance; or we must have recourse to that of the footman."

"If it is to be so, I shall be ready to do the best I can."

The front dining-room door re-opened. Anne Douglas came out again, saying —

"We are ready. Armand, you may come in."

And he entered.

The sufferer was lying upon the sofa, which she had not yet quitted, still in the dress she wore the evening before, but with a large and rich India shawl thrown over it, and over her head. Under this drapery, her slender figure, and the delicate features of her beautiful face, now of a deadly paleness, were visible. Her arms were thrown in a sort of negligent listlessness before her; her eyes, very large and fine, were almost preternaturally open, and had a touching seriousness in them.

To Armand, it seemed as if she were aware of the danger she was incurring, and felt all the unkindness which exposed her to it.

But she made not the slightest resistance to her aunt's wishes. She threw a grateful, half-imploring glance towards Miss Douglas, and then she turned her eyes full upon Armand. There was some indignation, and much determination, visible in them.

"I will, at least, thank the gentleman who saved my life," she said.

"Of course we are all greatly indebted to him. I hope, my dear, I have not left it to you to express our gratitude. Don't hurry yourself with speaking, pray."

"It seems to me like a dream," she said, fixing her eyes again upon Armand, "but I do not forget it all. You saved my life at the risk of your own, and I thank you for it, sir."

Mrs. Fitzroy looked impatient to be gone.

As for Armand, the look, the sensibility and beauty of those fine but languid eyes, the feeling tone and manner of the words addressed to *him*, struck him so, that he scarcely knew where he was.

"I will raise the head and shoulders, if you will carry the feet," began Dr. Armitage. "Stay — not so; we will carry her to the carriage-door upon the mattrass, where the necessary accomodation for keeping her in a recumbent position is provided."

Armand placed himself at the feet. The dreamy eyes were fixed upon him.

The little exertion she had made seemed to have

been too much for her. A faint hectic colour was on her cheek, and the eyes looked uncertain and disturbed; but they rather the more for that seemed to fasten upon him.

How he managed to perform the part assigned to him he knew not, for he was trembling with agitation; but he did accomplish it. He assisted to place her in the carriage, into which the lady, with a thousand polite apologies for the trouble given, made her way. The doctor followed. The door was shut; and before Armand could recover from his surprise, disappointment, and anger, the carriage was gone.

And so, like the vanishing of a vivid dream, which can scarcely be distinguished from reality, the vision of the last night passed from before his eyes; and he awoke to find himself alone, in a sense in which he had never known himself to be alone before.

He stood like one stupified upon the steps, watching the departing carriage; scarcely distinguishing the real from the unreal, or knowing whether it had not all been a fantastic delusion — so suddenly had it broken upon his life — so suddenly to disappear.

She was gone, and he had not even learned her name. He could not even give a name to this being, who had made such a wild impression upon him.

He stood thus upon the steps, long after the carriage had disappeared, and long after Ambrose, tired of waiting, had gone away, leaving the door open.

At last, he seemed to come to himself, and with a heavy sigh re-entered the house, feeling as if the light of his existence had been at once extinguished; and going up to his own room, he locked himself in.

There he fell into a chair, and remained for some time in a sort of insensibility, never looking up, far less touching his pencils, or resuming his usual employments. At last, he suddenly rose, carefully collected all the sketches he had made during the morning, examined them one by one, with a passionate sort of avidity; then collected them hastily, buried them in the depths of a portfolio, and locked the portfolio in a drawer, as if resolved no profane eye should ever gaze upon its contents; then quitting the room, he left the house, got through the streets he knew not how, and reached some most lonely and desolate fields upon the Essex side of the town. He roamed about there till after nightfall.

It was a damp path which he took, under trees heavy with foliage, and wetted with rain which had fallen during the afternoon; and as the sun went down, heavy, curling mists rose from the low grounds near the river — but he regarded them not.

Solitude was what he wanted — to indulge his thoughts undisturbed — if thoughts they could be called, which they scarcely amounted to! One desire, however, pressed upon him with intensity — he must hear more of her — he must see her again. It was impossible, he thought, after all that had passed, but that some further

notice must be taken of his family by her friends — hasty and most ungracious as Mrs. Fitzroy's departure had been. In any event, however, he had got her address, and the very next day he would go to Lower Grosvenor Street, and learn something or other of her family.

And so he wandered, lost in a young man's now painful, now pleasant musing, till he found himself a considerable way from his father's house, and through the trees and hedgerows saw the sun, with a yellow, watery splendour, going down behind the hills.

Then he recollected where he was, and turned homewards. But the wind began to rise, and the evening, for that time of year, became extremely chilly. At last rain fell in large drops; a regular pelting wet evening came on. He had lost his way among these lonely fields, and did not know very well where he was.

He was at no time a very robust person, and the fatigues and excitements of the last twenty-four hours had exhausted him a good deal. He wandered about, chilled and wetted through with this rain, which soon fell in torrents; but at last he reached the turnpike-road, and knew his way.

However, it was nearly ten o'clock before, excessively wet and weary, he reached Du Chastel's house.

He went straight up to the drawing-room fearful that his mother would be uneasy — which indeed he found her. His father had been from home upon business all

the afternoon; so that Claire was quite alone, and excessively uncomfortable.

He remained some time with her, regardless of his wet clothing, accounting to her for his absence, and describing where he had wandered, and how he had lost himself. A little more time was spent in enquiry whether anything had been heard of the young lady; a little more in discussing the manner of her departure. At length, Madame Du Chastel suddenly recollected the state of her son's clothes, and insisted upon his going to change them.

He obeyed her, but soon returned, looking very ill, and speaking hoarsely, and when she questioned him with much anxiety, he confessed to feeling not well, and complained of considerable oppression and pain at the chest.

In short, the next morning found Armand delirious with fever, and in immediate danger from severe pleurisy, the result of various causes combined; so that, far from being able to go, as he intended, to Lower Grosvenor Street, he was obliged to be kept confined to his bed; and was in such a state, that he was incapable of even expressing his wishes upon the subject to others.

He raved of what had passed, but too incoherently to betray his secret; and in this state he remained several days.

The first enquiry, when he was restored to his senses, was as to the young lady.

His mother had heard nothing of her, and had been far too anxious about her son, to trouble herself upon the subject.

He felt too shy to express the intense desire he had to know something more — his internal consciousness kept him silent — and his silence so far imposed, not only upon his mother, but upon his father and Anne Douglas, that they suffered the subject to pass by.

It was nearly a month before Armand was well enough to leave the house; and the first use he made of his liberty was to hasten, with a beating heart, to Lower Grosvenor Street. He had taken a hackney-coach, for he was still quite incapable of walking the distance.

The coach stopped at the door of a handsome house, and Jarvey descended to knock and to ring.

Long he knocked, and many times he rang, before any answer was made. At last an old shabbily-dressed, dirty-looking woman responded to the summons.

"Who am I to ask for, please, sir?"

"Let me out!" And Armand ascended the steps with a painful misgiving that the family were no longer there.

"Does this house belong to Mrs. Fitzroy?"

"No, sir; to Mr. Terry."

"To Mr. Terry! I was told a family of the name of Fitzroy lived here."

"Lodgers, may be, sir. Mr. Terry let this house for the season; he does not live in it himself."

"Is there any one living here now?"

"Only myself, sir; but I've heard say a family is coming."

"Who occupied the house last?"

"Can't say, sir — never inquired. I have been only put in two or three days ago, as the other woman is dead."

"Then you know nothing of the family of Fitzroy? Perhaps they did not occupy this house, and there is some mistake — the next possibly."

It was a faint hope soon destroyed by the woman saying —

"Yes, sir. Now, I recollect the last occupiers were named Fitzroy. They took the house for the season, I believe, but went away sooner than was intended. Somebody was ill, I think I heard say. The house has stood empty ever since. I believe it's let again now; but would you please to look at it?"

"Yes; I should be glad."

There was a sort of satisfaction in even entering the rooms where she had been, and something more might be elicited from the examination.

But there was little to be seen. It was a large, rather handsomely-furnished house — such as houses intended to be let for the season are — retaining not a trace of the domestic habits of those who last occupied it.

He visited every room, but he could make out nothing. The woman was perfectly ignorant upon the

subject. Her only reason for supposing that the house had been occupied by Mrs. Fitzroy was, now he mentioned the name, she thought she recollected it; and there was the cover of a letter, too, which was lying in a drawer of the writing-table. She could not read herself, but as the young gentleman seemed anxious to know something about these people, — why, there it was.

And there it unquestionably was — an old cover of a note, embossed with flowers and Cupids, and edged with a pink line, according to the taste of that day, and addressed, "Mrs. Fitzroy, 25, Lower Grosvenor Street."

That decided the matter so far. He could learn nothing more.

Who were these Fitzroys? From what part of the country had they come, as they were not resident in London?

She was sure she knew nothing about it. Even a half-crown failed to elicit any intelligence; she could tell nothing, for she knew nothing.

"Possibly Mr. Terry might know something about them?"

She didn't know. Mr. Terry was a gentleman of property. The house was let by an agent. She didn't know what agent. There were many. Couldn't justly recollect which of them it was; was herself put in here by Mr. Thompson, the green-grocer, who took care of the house, &c. &c.

Nothing more could be got out of her.

They were gone, then; every trace had vanished. This little episode in his life was to remain as if it had never been.

A haunch of venison and a basket of fine fruit had one day been left at the door of Du Chastel's house, with Mrs. Fitzroy's compliments; but this had been whilst he was ill, and no inquiries had been made.

This acknowledgment was the only notice ever taken upon the part of the young lady's family, and no more was heard or seen of any of the party.

The subject gradually died away.

With Armand it remained as a sweet and beautiful vision, that made his heart beat whenever he thought of it; but other and deeper interests after a time succeeding, drove the matter almost entirely from his mind.

CHAPTER XI.

THIS little break in Armand's usually uneventful life, had happened at least three or four years before I first became acquainted with Du Chastel and his son, upon that fearful night when I met them in Spital Fields.

We have seen how to the object of assisting the suffering workmen every sacrifice of personal indulgence, and even the dearest object of Armand's heart, had been given up; and how, with the hope of effecting a per-

manent relief to hundreds of starving weavers, by largely extending the trade of the community, Mr. Du Chastel had engaged in an extensive and somewhat perilous speculation.

For some time things went on prosperously, and there was every reason to hope, not only that a lasting benefit would be conferred upon the silk trade, but that Mr. Du Chastel's private fortune would be very considerably increased.

The conduct of these important affairs, however, absorbed almost the whole of his time. He was occupied from morning to night in his counting-house — his wife was perforce left very much alone.

This interfered greatly with Armand's plans and wishes.

The idea of going to Italy, the subject of such intense desire, had been abandoned. At first, as we have seen, because he could not think it right in days of such extreme distress to divert so considerable a portion of his father's means from the purposes of charity. As distress subsided, and his father's fortune promised to improve, the old desire was naturally revived in his mind. The devotion to his art had only increased with his years, and in a way not usual, I think, with those who do not pursue it as a profession. Few amateurs are found so persevering, so industrious, so devoted to their pursuit as he was. But Armand stood in a peculiar position; he was not diverted from his object by any of

those pleasures and distractions which most young men in easy circumstances are surrounded by — he lived in a remote district of the city, and belonged to a community apart.

It was, what he thought his duty to his mother which now alone delayed the long-looked-for journey to a land to him so full of hope and promise. Duty to both parents seemed to require that the plan should not be carried into execution until his father was in some degree released from his present cares and exertions. And so time fled away.

And a few more years had elapsed.

* * * *

And now they are over.

I was idly looking over the Gazette as I sat at breakfast in a coffee-house in Edinburgh, when, to my horror and surprise, my eye was arrested by the name of "Du Chastel, master weaver, Spital Fields," in the list of bankrupts.

Greatly shocked, but still hoping it might be some other person, I turned to a friend of mine, a man largely engaged in trade, and pointing out the name, inquired if he knew anything about it?

"Ah! — He's gone at last! It was a tickle business I always understood; that affair of the Bonnivettas — honest people enough, I believe — but they wanted

capital — wanted capital. Poor Du Chastel! So he's gone at last! He was an excellent, honourable, high-minded fellow, but had some odd crotchets of his own as regarded trade. As Marston says, 'Crotchets don't fill purses.' It will be some time before we see Marston in the Gazette, I take it."

"What was there in this transaction of Mr. Du Chastel's that rendered it so very imprudent? It is not the first time I have seen people shake their heads at it. I am surprised that a man like him should engage in doubtful speculations of any kind; he seemed so moderate in his wishes and expectations."

"Very much so. But he had got it into his head that this scheme would be a very beneficial one for the Spital Fields weavers. It was not done through greediness of gain I am assured, but through pure, though perhaps somewhat romantic, philanthropy. Unluckily, my dear sir, trade and philanthropy have nothing upon earth to do with each other."

"The more the pity," said I.

"Why the more the pity? I think when flourishing traders and honest men break, and in their ruin involve hundreds and hundreds of dependant creatures, the more the pity *then*. Can you realise what it is for a great house to stop? The wide-spreading mischief and misery. — Poor fellow! Du Chastel will, I verily believe, feel all this far more than his own loss. But he should not have indulged in these benevolent dreams, as I was

saying. He could get not one of his brothers in trade to back him, as I understood....It was a bad business, I'm afraid —"

"But the weavers were starving, were they not?"

"I am afraid so. But there was no help for it. Time and change of fashions might have done something for them. I know little about the matter. I heard Marston one day talking about it, and that made me acquainted with the little I do. He condemned this Du Chastel without measure. I, in spite of my general principles upon the subject, thought there was a good deal to be said for the Frenchman; but Marston's a close-handed man."

"And hard-hearted," thought I.

Too true it was, the crash for some time anticipated had at length come.

I need not detail the causes which precipitated the disaster; I think the sudden death of Bonnivetta was one.

Be that as it may, Du Chastel was ruined.

It was impossible for him to meet his engagements, and he was obliged to stop payment.

Everything went.

There were no marriage-settlements to fall back upon no property previously secured, which could insure a sufficient supply even of daily bread. Nothing whatever remained to him.

And it was the work of a few hours!

Such complete destitution is rare. There are usually relations — friends of some sort or other, to fall back upon.

There was nothing of the sort in this case.

Not a penny that was justly his own was left to him.

And to touch a penny of what belonged to his creditors, would have been to him more abhorrent than death in tortures.

His honour as a soldier and a gentleman — his truth and faith as a just and righteous man, forbade him even to lay claim to some little things which might, perhaps with justice, have been considered as belonging to his son. But there was a doubt upon the subject, and Armand would as little hear of endeavouring to secure them as his father.

A few pictures, painted by Armand's own hand, were all he would take. Every one of his little treasures of art, so carefully accumulated and treasured, were given up to the creditors — for they had been purchased with his father's money.

A small reversion which, upon his father's death, had been bequeathed to the son, was, I forgot to say, all that was left to them; but, when realised, it would produce a mere trifle; yet, trifle as it was, it was received by Du Chastel with intense gratitude.

He stood there, to use the pathetic expression of Byron, "upon his domestic hearth, with all his household gods shattered around him" — that brave Christian

hero! — and he bowed his head and worshipped — “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

It is difficult to realise the heaviness of the blow, the greatness of the fall, or the suffering occasioned by that laceration of every hope, sentiment, and old remembrance, which such an event produces.

Life violently wrenched in twain — the carefully-erected edifice of social comfort and domestic happiness fallen into one confused ruin — the future a blank.

Every dearest association of home — every external claim to respect and honour, self-repose and self-reliance, gone — all most beautiful and dear annihilated! Honest pride and native dignity exchanged for humiliation and shame. The very peace of conscience — that peace which usually waits upon and sweetens honest though unsuccessful endeavour, is not for the unhappy man. The cries of the numbers who in such a catastrophe must inevitably suffer, are clamouring at the heart, and cruel questionings and doubts as to the propriety of a course, the result of which has proved so deplorable, distract him — bitter regret, not unmingled with self-reproach!

All — all are there!

But the son understood it well, and sat by that once-happy fireside, now no longer their own, and shared the bitterness of his father's feelings, and strove to emulate his constancy.

One look Du Chastel cast upon that couch where his wife, that martyr of so many years, had laid, enjoying the sweetness of every attention which love such as his could give. That glance was the only return upon personal feeling that was made.

He thought only of those he had so undesignedly injured — his sole anxiety was for his creditors.

Few words passed between father and son that first evening.

The day had been spent in harassing business, and they had now retired to this long-loved room to pause and breathe.

Armand had been indefatigable in his exertions to assist his father, and the devoted energy of his affection even in that dark hour had been a cordial to Du Chastel's heart.

The father drew strength and solace from the devotion of the son; the son felt his moral life expand as he gazed upon his father.

Full of thoughts — of devoted self-sacrifice — and resolution to live only to help him, so Armand sat; and the dreams of love, and the visions of art and beauty, sank into nothing.

"My dear boy," said Du Chastel, rousing himself at last from the deep reverie into which he had fallen; "I forgot you — and you forget yourself. This has been a hard day, my son. I am an old battered oak, but you are but a young sapling, yet in all your green-

ness. I am not beginning to dote, I hope; but I seem to be growing poetical. I mean to speak very simple prose, I assure you, when I ask you to ring the bell and order yourself some cold meat and tea — if there is anything in the house.”

“I had forgotten it, sir. One does not feel very hungry to-day.”

“No; but tea is, after all, a cheerful counsellor in the worst of cases. We must have a little talk together, and how better than over a cup of tea, which you shall make for me? I don’t know how it is, my boy” — looking at him with great affection — “but I grow old-womanly, I think To have anything from that hand of yours Well, well; it’s very sweet — that’s all.”

It was as much as Armand could do to restrain his tears. He was yet so unhacknied, so little used up by life, that the water lay sadly near his eyes; but he repressed them, and answered cheerfully —

“I am half afraid to ring the bell and summon the old man; he looks so fearfully out of sorts, not knowing whether to be cross or compassionate; besides, I dare say, he’s dozing in his chair. Pity to rouse him. I’ll just slip down, put the kettle on myself, and bring up tea in two seconds. If there is anything in the house, we’ll eat it; if not, we’ll do without.”

It did not amount to a smile, but a cheery brightness came over the father’s face. He looked at his son, and

his heart felt lighter. Yes, he was of the right sort — the genuine old stock. He met disaster as a brave soldier faces the enemy.

“With sudden glory, as a man inspired,” as Wordsworth has it, there was not only courage but cheerfulness about him. More than patience — more even than submission — bright elasticity of spirits, that grappled with adversity almost gaily. The gaiety was a little forced, perhaps, for Armand felt so much for his father — had it been himself only, the task would have been easy — but this Du Chastel did not perceive.

He felt that this day had brought his son's character to the proof. He saw how that proof was met; and he felt that he had a friend — a staff and right hand, and a loving child in one.

Whatever lay before them, together they should struggle through — together they should overcome everything.

* * * * *

Armand found Ambrose, as he had expected, dozing by the kitchen fire, drowsy through fatigue and sadness. He was the only servant left in the house — all the rest had been discharged.

He stepped softly in, not to disturb the old man, who sat there, nodding, and groaning, and grumbling, and sighing, in his doze.

The kettle, however, had been placed upon the bars, and was simmering cheerfully, just as he had so loved to hear it when a child, as he sat upon the old man's knees, waiting for the grand moment of projection when it would boil over.

An ancient tabby cat, a privileged favourite, lay comfortably, as cats alone know how to do, in front of the grate, upon a sort of round tablet, in the middle of the old-fashioned fender; the fire glistened and flashed upon the rows of kitchen utensils, bright in all their homely wealth, which were ranged upon the shelves, and upon the old French and Dutch china plates and dishes, rich with flowers and grotesque patterns, and fine colours. The floor was of whitened stone, carefully sanded over; the dressers of ancient oak or walnut, shining with polish. It was just like one of those old Dutch paintings which one delights in, one hardly knows why.

How he had loved it! How he did love it! How it spoke at once to the artist and the man!

So beautiful and dear!

He sighed and looked round.

Sighed again and again, as his eye took in every long-loved object, for truly the household gods were more especially there — when kitchens of old were charming things. In Puritan families especially, who even to my day preserved these remnants of another form of life. There was a delicate and minute clean-

liness and brightness to be observed in them, which gave a quite ideal beauty to this prosaic part of everyday life.

Armand walked up to the long, ancient oak dresser, with its drawers and their elaborately ornamented handles shining like rich gold, surmounted by those ranges of shelves ascending to the ceiling, and ornamented with a handsome somewhat heavy cornice at top, and covered over with a wealth of fine old stately china, the beauty of which his artist eye had long learned to appreciate.

He had loved and treasured it, and had secretly resolved, some time or other, to persuade his mother to bestow the precious relics upon him.

Now it must all go.

But what was he about — indulging weak and regretful feelings of this trivial nature?

It was all pain — nothing but pain. He was much tired, and his spirits were failing fast; but it would never do to begin the new life in this childish way. He must not weaken his mind by whining about trifles.

This dear old place! It was his last look! He is carrying up the tea-board — leaving Ambrose still asleep — and he is making tea, and endeavouring, by his own cheerfulness, to cheer his father, whose heart, in spite of all he could do, was still very heavy.

CHAPTER XII.

THE attic of a tall and shabby-looking house, at the lower end of one of those streets which run from the Strand to the river, choked up by wharfs and mean buildings upon every side. This attic, owing to its height, commanded a view of the stream; the Surrey side opposite, with its buildings and wretched church; and further on, two of the bridges in the distance; on the west, the looming towers of Westminster Abbey were seen, and upon the other hand, a refreshing glimpse of the green trees of the Temple Gardens.

It was a poor low room, of which the walls, far from enjoying the luxury of paper, seemed to have forgotten their last white-washing, and whose smoke-dried rafters darkened the ceiling, and was, at the time I am writing of, in the occupation of a very young, but most indefatigable artist.

He had chosen these apartments, first and foremost, because they were very cheap. They lay much out of everybody's way, and were to be reached by many — so many flights of stairs — that none but the very poor, who must learn to submit to all kinds of inconvenience, would have thought of taking them. But to the present occupier, young and active, and unaccustomed to indulgence, this objection, so formidable to many, was a matter of indifference; not so the advantages obtained by

mounting so high. The freshness of the air, the wide expanse of the sky, sun-rises and sun-sets, the gleaming flow of the ever-changing river, those grey, beautiful queenlike towers of Westminster Abbey, in all their soft varieties of expression through the mists of morning, in the bright gleam of a July day, or golden-framed in a setting sun, were to him a source of never-failing delight: a delight of which those who revel daily in such things, can form but little idea.

The trees of the Temple Gardens, especially, their wide-spreading branches rising in domes one behind the other in delicious green, and the glimpse to be caught of the turf and walks, and sometimes of little children running about whilst nurse-maids rested on the benches, was, if possible, still more to be enjoyed. How the heart of poet or painter, immured in a wilderness of roofs and stone walls, longs and yearns for green! I have heard one say, even a bit of green railing, all the verdure his window commanded, was dear to him.

Our artist had a few additional pleasures thrown by accident into the bargain.

His window overlooked a small open space at the back of a joiner's workshop, and the joiner chanced to be a poet and a lover of nature in his way. In this miniature court, but a few yards square, he had improvised an apology for a garden. There was a little blackish turf, a sooty laburnum-tree, a vine, and a vir-

ginian creeper, all growing in boxes, and trained against the work-shop wall.

In spring, when they first put forth their young leaves, before dust and smoke had defiled them, there was a pleasant freshness on them, and he loved to look down upon it and watch the advances of the "*bella primavera gioventù de l'anno*," even in these her most humble developments. Moreover, there was inhabiting that joiner's workshop window another living being, whose heart answered to the advance of spring as his own did, a caged thrush. Who that has lived in London and heard the thrilling notes of the thrush coming up from some back court, or lowly chamber in a mews, but has felt his heart thrill to it?

What pictures do those sweet, fresh, gushing notes of bliss awaken!

This thrush was our artist's consolation and joy. A kind of sweet, beneficent, fairy spirit, whose tones had power to call up a world of visionary enchantments.

Sitting at his easel, his pallet on one hand, his brush in the other, his casement window wide open, the air pouring in as it came freshening with the tide up the Thames, the distant hum and roll of the great city, the cries and varied scenes from the river mingled and softened, and this sweet, warbling, indefatigable little thrush pouring out its voice of melody through all! there was something not easy to be described in it. He was a happy man at such moments, in spite of everything.

His heart swelled and yearned with an ineffable sense of beatitude and good all pervading; an atmosphere of the beautiful and the pure surrounding him; an overflowing fountain springing up to the true life, and the green herbs and living waters making glad the wilderness.

His heart and his imagination were nourished by these things. A little suffices to him who carries the best riches in himself — which this young man pre-eminently did. Where the imagination is in itself exceeding rich, a little suffices to call the visionary ecstasy to life; and where the heart is most feeling and most loving, most generous, disinterested, and single, to childlikeness, a little suffices to make it glad.

He loved the beautiful arch of the sky overhead — he loved the glimpses of fair things which from his lofty window he could descry over that hideous confusion of roofs and chimneys below him. He loved the breath of the spring-wind as it gently passed over his temples. He loved his little room, his easel, his sketches, his copies, and those inarticulate murmurings in art, his own attempts at composition and invention.

He loved even the almost mechanical, and what many would have despised as utterly unworthy, labours by which he subsisted; but above all, did he love that little thrush, singing below there to himself. And yet, cheerful, brave, humble, patient, as he was, he had many and many a desponding hour.

He was an artist labouring for his bread. Every

morsel which he put into his mouth was to be earned by the works of his hand. He was, moreover, as we know, a youth of extraordinary promise and genius. Nature had endowed him with all those faculties which are indispensable to the constituting of a great painter — splendour of imagination, correct and delicate taste, the instinctive eye for colour, composition, and form, and that singular facility of hand, which is to the stander-by, one of the most incomprehensible gifts with which Nature endows her favourites. All this and more, had been bestowed — but here his advantages had ended.

Born in a station of society which almost forbids the following of art as a profession; placed under circumstances which would render any profession as a means of gaining subsistence unnecessary — it had not been imperative upon his parents to educate him for one. Whereas had he been obliged to get his livelihood by his pencil, he would then from the beginning have received that regular preparation for the pursuits of art, which the first masters and finest geniuses in the world have felt to be indispensable to success, and have sought with the greatest perseverance and assiduity to obtain.

In consequence, when the utter ruin of his father threw young Du Chastel upon his own resources for subsistence, he found himself in a most distressing situation.

To endeavour to procure employment by any other means than by his pencil was not to be thought of. And

even if the idea could be entertained, he did not know where to turn to obtain it, even in the humblest situation. Besides, he was as utterly unfitted for the pursuits of trade, as he was wonderfully gifted for his own. And there are things which a man feels it absurd to attempt. To cross a strong natural vocation being one.

Yet, what was to be done?

A trifling reversion which belonged to himself, as we said, he had immediately sold at the time of his father's reverses, and placed the money in the funds, as a resource, at least for the present, which would supply urgent necessities, and especially what in the elder Du Chastel's eyes was the first of necessities, the means of affording those little comforts and conveniences which the state of his wife's health demanded. These, neither father nor son could endure the idea of her being deprived of — they would have gone without bread themselves first.

This slender fund, it was hoped, might be made to last out till Du Chastel should have so far settled his affairs, as to be able to enter some merchant's house in a dependent situation — such as a man utterly without money and means must be content to fill; but assuredly there would be nothing left to spare for the exigencies of an artist's training.

This, which appeared to be the indispensable condition of maintaining himself by painting as a profession, was for the present utterly out of the question. And

already had Armand arrived at that age when a further delay in this matter threatened to be fatal to all hopes of future excellence. The prospect was indeed most disheartening.

Many a proud, many a sanguine, many a brave spirit, would have sunk under it.

But our Armand was one too noble for despair.

His was no haughty spirit that could not stoop; he possessed that royal humility which holds nothing base, or beneath a man's regard, which belongs to duty, honour, or affection. Duty was the voice of God — honour was its reflex in the conscience of man; affection was with him a something simple, warm, and true, whose strength was the very strength of nature. Nothing that he could do which would enable him to discharge the obligations thus imposed, was beneath him — nothing too menial or too servile.

He must maintain himself — that was his first duty. The rest would come, or would not come, as He should decide in whose hands are the courses of men. Whether the talents He had bestowed should ripen to their just perfection, or whether they should perish blighted under the evil influences that surrounded him, was not his to decide.

The gifts of nature which he had received were singularly great, but their possession gave him no *right* to claim an equal share in those of fortune. Because he had been endowed above his fellows in some things, did

a claim arise to be favoured more than the rest in others, and escape by a sort of miracle from the inevitable consequences of a catastrophe like his father's? No. What lay before him, that he would accept; where the path pointed, he would follow cheerfully and without a murmur — if possible, without a vain regret.

He would achieve all that honest, strenuous endeavour could achieve; but he would be no dependant upon other men's charity. Painter or not painter, he would be the son of his own right hand.

Such were his reflections and resolutions.

The most painful of his regrets — and I know scarcely any regret more painful to a man on the threshold of active life — was the loss of unredeemable time. The impossibility, as it appeared, for one who started so late in the race, ever even to approach that goal not easily reached even by those who have the fresh morning of the day before them. It is interesting to mark how certain thoughts and recollections sometimes start into the mind — we know not whence — as if an angel of comfort whispered them. One day, when Armand was battling with little success against despondency, and a sense of difficulties not to be overcome by one who so late had started in his career — the remembrance of Claude Lorraine suddenly came into his mind. He knew not by what association — for he had forgotten it — how Claude Lorraine had been a cook and a grinder

of colours till he was nearly, if not past, thirty years of age.

What man has been, man may be.

And from that hour Armand despaired no more.

* * * *

The first occupation he found for himself was humble indeed. He applied to a publisher of children's books, and got himself engaged to colour coarsely-executed prints, with which, at that time of day, such books were adorned, and others of the like description, to be made up into children's puzzles.

What was to be sold so cheap, must be cheaply done; and what every one almost can do will easily find hands to accept the task at the price required. It took many hours of every day at such work, to produce enough to provide him with the daily half-crown which he made suffice to find food, lodging, and clothing. A small back-room, or rather hole, in which any cultivation of his art seemed impossible, had been all which at first could be thus provided.

Scarcely was there light enough through the window, closely surrounded by high buildings on every side, for even this rude work to be executed; far less, it would appear, for the prosecution of those studies to which he devoted every instant of time that was left. But he was not to be discouraged.

He could at least draw, in this obscurity, when days were long, and the sunlight lingered reflected upon the opposite wall; drawing, severe, correct drawing, he knew to be the foundation of all permanent excellence in art — draw he would, and he did. With a bit of blackened wood at first, and on the coarsest paper, and from the life — though the models were his own foot and hand.

He used to go every morning to his employer's shop, receive the large bundle of prints to be coloured that day, return to his room, drink his bowl of milk, and eat his crust of dry bread, and proceed to work indefatigably, till the pile was finished. This rarely happened till six or seven o'clock in the evening, when he carried his work back, and at the end of every week received his money. Thus Armand Du Chastel was become a mere day-labourer — a Proletaire.

His lodging and the necessary food consumed ten shillings, to provide decent clothing the sixth of what remained was laid by; one shilling and sixpence was the surplus of the whole, which was sacredly hoarded — deposited in a little box, as a fund to provide for the exigencies of art.

It was a poor beginning; but Armand remembered "the day of small things," and was thankful. I believe few men who count their accumulations by tens and hundreds of thousands, experience that sunshine of delight with which, on a Saturday night, this young man dropped his one-and-sixpence through the slit in the lid

of his treasury — his strong-box; — a little childish affair, which had been the gift of his dear old uncle, when he was scarcely out of the nursery.

Then he would indulge in all the luxury of ablutions, and of a toilette carefully arranged, throwing aside his rough working dress, putting on his best coat, and the various little articles then thought indispensable to the plainest appearance of a gentleman; arraying himself as scrupulously to please his father's eye, as ever a lover did to meet his mistress; and, light of heart, cheered by that warm and comfortable thing, an honest conscience, he would sally forth, to drink tea with his father and mother.

Saturday night was always given to them. It was a sacrifice to spare these few hours from his pencil; but it was a sacrifice gladly offered at this shrine.

The elder Du Chastel had taken rooms in a small house, standing in a small row at Islington, where there were strips of grass in front, with a tree or two in each, and slips of kitchen garden behind, where a few peas, greens, pinks, rosebushes, and gooseberries grew together.

It was a homely little place, but it was quiet within and without; and there was fresh air to be had blowing up these strips of gardens; the row of houses which stood opposite being equally provided in this respect, and a broad road between the two lines. Quiet and fresh air were what poor Claire's nerves found indis-

pensable. They were the very conditions of existence to her — and here they were secured.

They had but two small rooms — a sitting-room to the front, a bed-room to the back; the proprietor and his wife occupied the remainder of the house. One of those quiet vegetating couples, who live like their own cabbages, and make scarcely more stir. No lovers of noise themselves, they were happy to receive this quiet pair, and with the assistance of a most demure little maiden of a charity girl, give the necessary attendance to the invalid, and provide the cooking for the table. All by the way being done with a scrupulous attention to neatness and nicety, which was common to the good wives of those good old times. I much doubt whether we should have the comfort of finding the same, if we went to look for it, by taking a couple of rooms in a small row of houses at Islington now-a-days.

At first, there had been no bed for Armand, and he had to return after a long fatiguing walk back to his own close little room to sleep; but the good couple were speedily interested in their lodgers; that noble-looking man who “surely had seen better days,” as the worthy retired breeches-maker had it.

And that poor sick lady, with those delicate white hands of hers, and that pale fair cheek, her nice ways, and gentle voice, and grateful thanks for every little thing that was done for her!

But most of all did the wife, they being a childless

pair, admire "that sweet, beautiful young man, with his bright face and his golden hair, looking like the angels themselves, — as if he gave out light, as I've seen it in a pictur' — coming to drink tea with his poor parents. I'm afraid they *are* very poor."

"I think, Mr. Bradley," she went on one day, after having indulged more than usual in poetry of the above description; for all the poetry in her nature — and we all have it somewhere or other — was called to life by these lodgers of hers: "I've been thinking, Mr. Bradley, that it's a pity now the days are growing shorter, and bad weather coming on, that the young lad — he's but a lad — on a Saturday night should have to go mud-dling through the nasty street, I know not how far, to his own lodgings. You know there's the little blue closet has a camp bed in it; you don't intend to let it; suppose we give it up to the young gentleman?"

"By all manner of means — what must we ask? Not much, I suppose — It's a small bit of a place, but then it's just new papered, and a white cotton bed costs money, and wants washing."

"Ask? You're not going to *ask* anything for it? If it could be had for paying for — that is, if they could afford to pay for it — do you think they would not have enquired about it long ago? John Bradley, it's no use mincing the matter, those people are as poor as church mice — not a sixpence to throw away, as in my heart I believe."

John Bradley gave a sort of discontented grunt.

"Ay, ay, I know — you're not fond of poor folk — never was. But there's something about what's poor — and not proud — who *has* had a right to be proud, mind, but's not proud — that goes to my heart. When one sees them poor souls — the old habit of doing things like gentlefolks — coming up, and then a sigh, and the shilling put back into the pocket — I find it very touching. Forgetting it you see for a moment — and then the memory coming back of what he is, John Bradley. I think it more moving than a play."

"Ay, ay; and so, if you had not some one nigh you with a better noddle than your own, you'd soon be fooled out of *your* money."

The good wife possessed that rarest and best of qualities in a wife. She was not swift to reply. She knew when to hold her peace, and so keep the peace.

She poured out Mr. Bradley's cup of tea; sugared and creamed it; gently put pussy aside, who lay purring before the fender; lifted from the brass footman the most crisp and delicious of toasted muffins; and then, and not till then, renewed the attack.

"I thought John Bradley loved to do a good-natured thing as well as anybody."

"And so I do; but not to let my lodgings for nothing."

"But you don't intend to let that room, you know; so what's the odds? If they could pay for it, wouldn't

they? but as they can't, what matters it? You know you gets nothing, any how... He's such a *good* boy — what our little Johnnie might have been, if the Lord had spared him, I somehow think — So pious and loving to his father. Don't you think our poor little one would have had just that shining golden hair, like threads of sun-beams?"

John Bradley gave a sigh.

"And to think of his a-walking all that weary way of a Saturday night — rain or snow, sleet or hail — because he *will* pay his duty to his *father*."

"Have it your own way. Do just as you like."

"Ay, that's you. — You are the best fellow in the world, John Bradley, when you think of it."

* * * *

This was the turning point.

The first little, agreeable, unexpected event which had greeted them. It was touching to see how all were pleased and cheered by it — they accepted it as an omen. To say nothing of the very real accommodation thus conferred, the pleasure of having their son every week from Saturday evening to Monday morning was very great. There is something so very encouraging in the first little turn of Fortune to those who have been exposed to all her stings and buffets — something so very sweet to those whom adversity hath made strangers even to a brother, in receiving a token of good will.

The Du Chastels, however, were uneasy till they could hit upon some means of shewing their sense of the good woman's kindness — but that was not long to seek.

Armand employed the time thus saved to him on a Saturday night, by making a candlelight study of his landlady's good man, with her cat — her beloved tabby — upon his knee; and this he presented to her.

She was delighted with it — as many others, better skilled in such things, far less interested in John Bradley and the cat than she was — might have been.

Du Chastel could not help exclaiming, when he saw it —

“I am no judge of such things; but it seems to me to have wonderful effect.”

The mother looked at it and sighed.

“How good it is!” and sighed again. “A painter! only a painter after all!” was her reflection — but she would not give it words.

“The light of the candle falls so well — and the old man is his very self — and yet far better than he ever looks. And as for the cat, I think I could put my hand into her long fur.”

And she returned it to her son, and sighed again.

CHAPTER XIII.

"I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine."

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

PERSEVERANCE is, perhaps, of all the virtues of this world, the one that most invariably insures its own reward. It was not very long before this resolute persistence in doing what lay before him, be it what it might, irksome or not, and doing it as well as he could, secured its recompense to Armand.

The proprietor of the business from which he received employment, was not long in perceiving the merits of the young stranger to whom he was giving work. His punctuality — his industry — the gentleness and softness of his manners, first excited his attention. In these qualities he far excelled his fellow-labourers, mostly negligent, rough young men, occupied in these lower branches — outer confines, if we may be allowed to call them so — of art. Which they undertook, because they were too idle to have made themselves capable of anything better, and were content, so that they earned enough for a few low indulgences, to grovel in the position of unskilled labourers for the remainder of their lives.

What they did was just hurried through well enough to escape dismissal — but that was all.

The attention of Mr. Grindly had been from the first excited by the distinguished appearance and manners of the young stranger — so very unlike what he was ordinarily accustomed to meet with. This led him to look over a few of the plates he had been employed to colour, and he could not help observing how much better than usual they were done.

He was led next to entrust some prints of a somewhat superior description to his hand, and he found equal reason to be satisfied.

Therefore, one morning, as Armand entered the shop to receive his daily tale of work, he was thus addressed by Mr. Grindly:

“Young gentleman” — in a friendly voice — “those last prints that you coloured were very well done.”

“I am glad you were pleased, sir,” was the reply, the colour mounting to the cheek with pleasure: so accustomed was he to discouragement, that even this little praise pleased him. “The subject interested me, and the colours given me were of a superior description. It was a pleasure for me to work upon it with them.”

“Was it? — and it’s a pleasure to me to have work so well done. And it’s a great pleasure also to me to see a young man so steady and well-behaved as I have found you to be; so, young gentleman, I have been thinking of something to your advantage.”

Rather a strange manner for the heir of the Du Chastels to be addressed by a tradesman in the Strand.

One flush of burning crimson mounted to the once proud cheek, but as quickly was it subdued. What was he now? Where it pleased Him, "who putteth down one and raiseth up another," to place him. What he once had, was bestowed; what he now *was*, imposed. There is no room for false pride when people think in this way.

"I am much obliged to you, sir, for your good opinion; and if it is your intention to favour me by some employment in a rather higher line of art to which I might be found competent, I shall, indeed, be greatly indebted to you."

"You'd get a good deal better remuneration for your time, you understand."

"It was not *that* I was thinking of, but the pleasure in the work; though the last consideration is far from a disagreeable one," said young Du Chastel, with a smile.

"Well, sir, there is about to come out one of the — I may say *the* most perfect and beautiful botanical work that has ever yet been published in England. It is by that celebrated botanist, Mr. Curtis. It's to be called the 'Flora Londinensis.' Artists of the highest merit have been engaged to make the drawings; the engravings from them are in the first style of excellence, really beautiful things, and we are about to engage the best hands to colour the prints. I think it is a matter you would be fully competent to undertake, and would enjoy. Do you love flowers? The work is to comprise

all the plants found growing in a circuit of twenty miles round London. There is a specimen of the work — well done, ain't it?"

And he handed to Armand that beautiful plate of the hawkweed, (*Hieracium umbellatum*), one of the innumerable examples of perfection in drawing of this description to be found in the "Flora Londinensis" of Curtis.

The eye of the young painter was rivetted upon it. He could at one glance discern the perfection of the drawing, the delicacy of detail, the grace, and simplicity of the execution. It gave the same, or even, perhaps, more pleasure than the real plant, with all its wild and simple charms, could have done.

"It is beautiful," he said. "Colour these! I should scarcely think it a mere mechanical operation to be so employed."

"Well, neither will it be altogether mechanical. It is Mr. Curtis's wish that the colouring of the first sheet should be from nature, assisted by reference to the original drawing. He thinks that the exact tints may thus be more perfectly obtained; — at least, he wishes the experiment to be made, wherever it is possible to obtain specimens. I should like you to try your hand at this sort of work; it will require both taste and skill. If I am not mistaken, young gentleman, you possess them both. What do you say to it?"

The heart of Armand really trembled with pleasure.

To colour from nature! To attempt the transfer to paper of those exquisite tints, and veins, and shades, and lights, over which he often had hung in mute rapture. This to be substituted for the gorgon caricatures, and monsters of hideous deformity and execrable drawing, upon which he had been so long employed.

He could not thank worthy Mr. Grindly enough.

The honest man was pleased. Gratitude — sincere, heartfelt gratitude — is sweet to all; and he must be gross and hard-hearted indeed who does not find pleasure in having bestowed genuine pleasure.

The good man's eyes twinkled.

"You'll handle this as if you loved it, I see," said he.

"Shall I not? This drawing is quite admirable; and are they all equally good?"

"Nearly so. And if you give satisfaction in the first attempt, we'll take care you've work enough. But you ask nothing about the terms. Do you mean to do it for the same as your vermilion and sap-green hobgoblins?"

"I could not do that. This will demand much time and care to do well. — How beautiful! — how excessively beautiful!" examining the engraving and comparing it with a specimen of the flower represented, which stood in a rummer-glass beside the publisher's desk. "One has no idea, until one comes minutely to examine such things, how *intrinsically* beautiful nature is — how far beyond all the best doings of man! These veiny leaves, the exquisite delicacy of texture, and of colour in the flower-

petals — I think they call them — the inimitable grace in the flexure of the stem!”

The publisher let him go on, fixing his somewhat hard brown eye upon him, till the eye softened — melted with an expression, strange enough to meet with there; but the unaffected pleasure of the young man touched him.

“I see you will do it well, and many things beside this well; go on and prosper.”

Du Chastel sighed.

“Ah! if I had but ...”

“But what?”

“The opportunity to improve.”

“What do you want in order to improve?”

“Time, materials, models, teaching — everything.”

“My dear young sir,” said the publisher, “numbers of fellows that I see every day possess all these advantages and make nothing of ’em. Perhaps you’ll make something through being without them; and I think you bid fair to do it.”

And this was the amount of worthy Mr. Grindly’s encouragement of rising talent. Yet it was something.

The terms of the new work were settled, and on a very liberal scale in comparison with those obtained before.

Du Chastel was most thankful, for it enabled him to change his lodging. The miserable hole he had till then occupied was already telling upon his health; the noise

upon nerves too morbidly delicate, and the darkness, especially in the short days, interfered with study.

He ventured upon the encouragement of this rise in his profession to please himself by taking his present rooms.

Their almost inaccessible height, planted at the top of such steep and narrow staircases — things which rendered them unacceptable to lodgers in general — were peculiarly agreeable to him.

Having no one overhead, or on the same attic, his upper staircase was his own, as well as the three rooms on the floor. The air in this lofty position was, for a city, fresh and wholesome — the neighbourhood of the river being thus in his pinnacle tower raised above its heavier damps, delightful. And few in the vast multitude around were happier than Armand Du Chastel taking possession of his new home, and arranging his little furniture. This consisted of a poor camp bedstead and flock bed, three chairs — one of them without a back, a crippled round table — one foot propped up on a bit of wood, two or three yards of green baize to stand for a carpet, his beloved easel, and, the only luxury of the place, a strong, well-made table, where to sit and colour his plates.

This indispensable article was the only one he had borrowed money from his friend the publisher to purchase. He had paid the debt by instalments, and the property was now his own.

Upon this table now lay a very large heap of plates for the "Flora Londinensis," which had been intrusted to him to colour. They were chiefly of apparently insignificant plants, but upon that account demanding especial taste and delicacy in the management.

Four different plates there were, which went to the formation of that huge pile now lying upon his table, all, as it happened, acquaintances and especial favourites of his own. One was the little pink wood-geranium (*Geranium Robertianum*), dear to every child as the familiar robin, with its sweetly-outlined veined pink diminutive flowers; its beautiful many-scented leaves of rich, warm greens, fading first into the richest crimson, and dying into a soft and melancholy yellow, as this plant may still be seen in that most delightful work of Curtis. There was the little tender nodding bluebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), with its tiny bell of heaven's own blue and its waxen clapper, formed to make a ring of bells for Titania's wedding-day. This likewise being a rare treasure to children, and here represented with a truth that carried you into the fields at once.

Wonderful specimen of perfection in botanical drawing and colouring.

He had been out the evening before, exploring secluded lanes and little woods, at that time not so distant from London as they are now, and had collected specimens of the plants he had undertaken, determined to adopt

Mr. Grindly's hint, and give a vitality to his tints, by a fresh comparison with nature.

The delight he took in the first print he executed, can scarcely be understood except by those who know the ecstasy excited in such minds as his by the contemplation of real excellence.

It proved a study as well as a delight.

It was not mute nature that he aspired to draw; but he was one to find lessons in plants, sermons in stones, and good from everything.

There is something in the physiognomy of Nature when she speaks in her endless variety of forms, that has a sort of humanity in it; telling of that something which lies under all forms of beauty, be it the modest, loving, little wood-geranium, or the passionate bud of the rose. And these charming flower-pictures upon which he was employed, helped the imagination in the invention of higher things; things where what was faintly figured in the flower, found full expression in the form next to divine of man.

Armand learned also at this time a good deal concerning the management and effects of colour, and considerable additional dexterity in the handling of it.

Everything is a lesson to genius inventive and perceptive as his. No doubt, there are numbers who spend their whole lives employed in the same manner, and learn really nothing, as there are those who pass a long

eventful life of experience, to end it just the noodles they began.

The work, when it came to a repetition upon the same identical subject for hundreds and hundreds of times, was tedious enough; and many an impatient spirit would have murmured and pitied themselves excessively for being condemned to such a drudgery. Not he; he was thankful and cheerful, whistling like a bird in emulation of the piping thrush below, as he coloured away.

And when the daily task was done, after allowing himself an hour for exercise and fresh air — for he began to treasure his health and to know the value of sound nerves and a sound spirit — he would return home with a heart throbbing with pleasure, to labour for the short time remaining at his real vocation.

The work in which he was engaged brought him now and then into communication with the gentlemen employed upon it. And his industry, the something to be observed in him above the mere mechanical colourer, his intelligent countenance, and, above all, his charming manners, interested every one who saw him.

Some valuable prints from the old masters were lent him to study and to copy. He at times enjoyed the opportunity of seeing some really fine pictures not accessible to the public as they are now.

He felt his knowledge expanding. He began to have glimpses of what he was about, of the proper objects of

his aims. He felt himself improving, and he felt himself growing rich; the little store devoted to the grand pursuit, began to increase into something that really could command the indispensables for study.

He was happy.

So happy, that it was a delight to look upon his face, as, faithful to duty, every Saturday evening saw him walking away to Islington. Threading the streets at a cheerful pace, a little basket in his hand, in which was some delicacy, a bit of crimson-gilled and golden fish, a sunny-feathered game bird, or maybe, a bunch of grapes, with their freshest bloom upon them, just delivered from a newly-arrived basket. The handle of his father's door he would turn without knocking, and enter, bringing peace and happiness with him.

There he would find his father resting after his week's work, sitting by the side of his wife's couch, reading or musing, serious, but calm, like one who had done with life, and only awaited his dismissal from a task which this last disaster seemed to have rendered too hard even for his courage.

He was now past the meridian of life. The galleys had absorbed his youth and middle age. Great and unmitigated suffering of mind, and the most cruel hardships, entailed by excessive labour and want of proper food combined, cannot be endured for any length of time, without sapping the strength of a man.

But it was not until this second catastrophe, this

repetition, with some variations of the same tale of utter ruin befel him, that he felt how different was the present man from the one of five-and-twenty years before.

The spring of life when thus pressed upon was found to be broken.

All he felt capable of undertaking, was, as I have said, a clerk's place in a merchant's house; and this he obtained.

People were ashamed to offer him so humble a situation, but he said it was what he was best fitted for. Of course he was able to command a tolerable salary — enough for his wants — and he was content.

With his usual humility he accepted his place, and performed its duties faithfully.

He never complained, yet cheerfulness he could scarcely be said to be able to command in himself — indeed he did not try for it. A calm seriousness — a gentle, placid dignity, was habitual with him, and inspired a respect which was not without a beneficial influence upon all the young clerks with whom he came into communication.

It is good to feel moral approbation and reverence for something that is not grandeur, is not power, is not splendour, is not money.

Every one was the better for having to associate with Du Chastel.

One only source of joy remained for the deadened heart.

Here he felt no mortification. It was impossible to do it.

He had struggled manfully once himself, and he loved to see the generous unbroken strength of the young spirit — the brave and vigorous swimmer, battling with the waves of life.

That he would finally conquer, he felt certain; he could feel no real anxiety for one born to excel.

Armand possessed the qualities which, according to Du Chastel's view of life, invariably succeed. Sooner or later, his son would be a distinguished — he was already a happy — man.

And thus time passed not altogether unpleasantly away.

CHAPTER XIII.

"'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
Appears in painting or in judging ill;
But of the two, less dang'rous is the offence
To tire our patience, than mislead our sense."

POPE.

I ENDED the last chapter with this sentence:

Thus the time passed not altogether unpleasantly away.

It is a happy period in most men's lives when they are preparing themselves to *do*.

It is the season of hope — hope unchastened by experience. A sort of fairy-land of justice and right; where success, of course, proportionably rewards honest

endeavour, and where there is any great natural capacity, does much more.

Everything smiles upon the young determined student. Difficulties vanish before his vigour and courage, for the difficulties he has to contend with are honest ones, arising from the nature of the task itself; absolute and positive in their form, and to be vanquished by the same means with which others have succeeded in overcoming them. It is a race in which the best and most determined runner invariably wins.

Whilst we are learners, our way is marked out plainly before us. The ascent may be steep, the path rugged, but every step we take brings us nearer to our end. Every night closes with the cheering reflection of an advance, however small, effected.

But different is it when once the gate is opened, and the threshold passed, which separates acquirement from execution.

"Gentlemen, I perceive you are not cabbages," began the stammering lecturer — and stopped short. He had long been preparing himself to address the public by haranguing the vegetables in his garden, and something of the same sort takes place when the student passes into the producer — be it in art, one of the professions, statesmanship, or life.

The moment of trial comes when we cease to follow, and step forth to do as best we can, alone.

Lascià ogni speranza voi ch'entrate, perhaps must

not be said; but Othello's pathetic farewell to his peaceful, thoughtless, unanxious nights and days is but too applicable.

Happiness — the bright, unclouded happiness of the young sanguine spirit, is henceforth at an end. And trouble, and care, and a hard contest — not with things merely, but with men — lies before him; and

“Oh the misery which man hath made for man!” —

And most of all, perhaps, for the follower of art.

For it is not with realities alone, but with all manner of visionary spectres, that genius thus directed has henceforth to contend. Not with sound and just criticisms, censures founded upon upright judgments, from which so much may be learned, and to which the honest mind yields assent with a certain satisfaction; but with all the vagaries of caprice, the mistakes of presumptuous ignorance, obtuse perception in influential places, and above all, the blightings of malice and envy.

To do well, no longer insures success; to do luckily, is often more. Chance, happy accident, favour, dexterous adaptation of talents to the popular taste, prevail so far; and true genius is seldom, one might say, almost never, dexterous.

“The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.” And there is something in the very nature of genius, which renders it singularly inapt for the vulgar contentions of the arena.

The very high imaginative feeling, which is its prime distinction, renders it rarely contented with the results of its own efforts; and where others censure, the deep sense of its own short comings makes it singularly prone to confirm the sentence.

Men take others upon credit much in the way as they see them esteem themselves; and the very humility of a fine idealism is against its possessor.

Sooner or later, however, the world does justice. But the battle is painful and long; and the tardy retribution sometimes arrives too late, except to adorn a grave. This contest, more or less, is the lot of all; and young Du Chastel had now to begin it.

* * * *

As soon as the improved nature of the employments in which he was engaged — ensuring a higher payment for his time — provided a sufficiency, by the occupation of a few hours, Armand had leisure for the serious cultivation of his profession, and he had become a student in the Royal Academy.

I shall not follow him through the labours that succeeded.

It was a happy period of his life, after all. He toiled with indefatigable industry, endeavouring to redeem lost time; and worked with so much intelligence, that there were few who in the same period managed to acquire so much.

He had no personal friends to forward or assist him in his studies; yet the unwearied student was not altogether unobserved. The beauty of his person, the gentle refinement of his countenance and manner, the simplicity and singleness of devotion to a purpose which distinguished him, and the remarkable originality of his attempts at composition, though teeming with mistakes, which proved his imperfect knowledge of the rules of art, excited the interest of a few.

They were but few; for it is the minority who have a more lively perception of beauties than of defects. The faults of a work of art of any merit generally lie upon the surface, and are obvious to every eye; but it requires an education to comprehend hidden merits.

Any looker-on could shrug his shoulders at a limb out of proportion long, or an arm out of proportion short: but few had an eye for the energy of an attitude; the pathos of an expression; the truth and simplicity with which a story was told; or the exquisite delicacy with which some of the accessories were handled.

One or two of the Academicians whose business it was to look after the schools, saw — and understood what they saw; and in their way proffered, from time to time, advice and correction, all most gratefully received and treasured up. Others glanced at his studies and passed by with silent contempt. He read the impression he made — sighed, but could not — would not — be disheartened.

In time Armand began to feel that he was in the way to triumph over his previous disadvantages. His eye and hand became educated. He not only conceived with rare invention, but began to execute accurately and well. To see as only the instructed eye can see, to delineate as only the practised hand can delineate.

At last the time arrived when the gauntlet must be thrown down. No longer a student, recompensed by the delightful sense of daily improvement, but an artist in the full sense of the word, who must give reality to his conceptions, and bring them before the world.

His first attempts were unambitious in size and character, such as you would expect from a man of his taste and judgment; but they were finished with the greatest possible care, and had a beauty in the design, and a sweetness and delicacy in the execution, which have long elevated these, his two first pictures, to a place among the jewels of cabinets.

He was pleased with them himself.

With what satisfaction did he hang them in the most favourable light of his little apartment, and spend time he was ashamed thus to waste, in examining them; trying the effect at different distances — touching a minute point here and there — filled all the time with that pure and intense delight which rewards the successful execution of a favourite design.

He had no friends or acquaintance to sympathise with his content; but something within him whispered,

that he was not mistaken, and that his two little pictures were really good.

His father, who rarely had leisure to get so far, made time to come and see them where they hung.

"I do not pretend, as I always say, to be a judge of these matters. I only know what pleases myself, and perhaps I am too ready to be pleased with anything you do, Armand; but to me, these two little pictures appear beautiful. We must carry them home, and shew them to your mother."

"My mother cares for none of these things; but I am glad you rather like them," and his cheek kindled with pleasure. "I could fancy there is something in them, but one is afraid of deceiving oneself."

"You will be a first-rate artist, Armand, or I am mistaken. And mark my words; even in that big room of the Academy, among thousands of pictures, these two little attempts will not be passed over; — but I must show them to your mother. They are subjects she would like — simple and touching, and delicately beautiful. Those wild flowers, or rather weeds in the foreground, are really exquisite; and yet they do not attract the eye from the main subject. We must not regret our disasters, my boy, if they have been the means of unburying your talents."

Du Chastel's satisfaction was really very great. His son's vocation being fixed by nature, as he believed —

he had yielded to necessity rather than choice, in allowing him to pursue it for a maintenance.

But that what unavoidably must be done, should be done so well — that as artist he must become, he would become one of the first among artists, was a satisfaction the father had scarcely dared to anticipate; now he felt assured of it. Armand's success he believed to be certain.

The two little pictures were that evening conveyed by father and son to Islington, to be shewn to Claire.

Anne Douglas happened to be taking tea with her at the time.

The extreme admiration with which this sincere friend looked upon these, his first finished productions, though chastened in its expression, as all the ecstasies of Anne Douglas had learned to be; was a strong confirmation of his father's previous judgment; and a happy evening of hope, which approached to security, was spent.

Any one who has had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the history of hanging committees, will be prepared for the result.

Rarely is there an exception. Disappointment is almost certainly attendant upon every first attempt, but more especially so in painting. A first book has at least a fair chance, and untried and unknown authors of works of merit have rarely had reason to complain of the injustice of the public.

But a picture!

Of course no one will be surprised to hear that these two precious little pictures — the result of so much arduous thought, care, and industry — loved as infants are by mothers — for no other love is like it — so bright with hope, so full of fair promise, the flattering harbingers of future success; of honest fame, and honestly-acquired means — to hear that these beloved little pictures were hung next the floor in a dark corner of one of the outer rooms, where they could scarcely be seen, and were certain not to be noticed. Surrounded, too, by flaring colours and dazzling effects, which altogether put out their modest beauty, his pictures were, at least, so far as Armand had reason to believe, totally overlooked, and they were returned to him without one syllable of encouragement.

That was a bitter moment.

Flung back, his two hands buried in his hair — which it was as much as he could do to prevent himself from tearing — he sat and looked upon these two innocent representations of ruined hope — and groaned aloud.

This it was then to be an artist.

He could not even command a criticism.

He had put forth his best, and it was utterly disregarded. It was plain he must have been altogether deceived in the estimate he had formed of his own powers. Thus he ran the changes upon that despondency

which succeeds to the destruction of expectations, perhaps too highly raised.

He should never get his bread by art. A mere colourist; he would return to the labours he had lately abandoned for higher hopes and aims — or, better sweep the streets — it would be less irksome and mortifying.

But the paroxysm did not last long.

More reasonable thoughts succeeded, as he became calmer. He had the faith which belongs to conscious power — he felt that his pictures had been unjustly neglected. Many that he had heard highly praised, were, after all, not better. He recollected the histories of artists which he had read, the oft-repeated tale of struggles with, and final triumph over difficulties, and he felt that he had no right to expect that the path should be made smoother to him than to others. His pictures had, at least, been admitted.

He must wait — that he would have been well contented so to do — but where was he in the meantime to find bread? If he was to paint pictures better than these, still more time must be bestowed upon them. The mechanical occupation of his hours had lately been suspended, for he had, during the latter period of study, lived upon his savings, which were now, in spite of his extreme frugality, exhausted; and if his pictures did not sell, where was he to turn?

He at last resolved to carry his two unfortunate children to a picture dealer, and see what could be got for them; for he now recollected with dismay, that the frames were not yet paid for.

The picture dealer examined them with a supercilious air.

"Admitted, did you say? Rather an unlucky admission that; for, I protest, I don't think any one even cast an eye upon them."

"So it would seem."

"Why — I don't find what there was very particular in them to attract attention. You see a certain breadth of effect, sir, is required to do that. In rooms, like those at Somerset House, these modest little affairs have no chance — and little enough anywhere else, believe me. Why, now, if I were to stick them up in my window, or give them a place in my back room, what prospect do you think there would be for them? — Do you see? — colouring — colouring, sir — something bright, something effective, is called for; not a neutral-tint weedy affair like this. Why, the very flowers you have introduced! One would not stoop to gather them in a hedge."

"Then the pictures will not suit your purpose. Sorry for the trouble," said young Du Chastel, his heart swelling with a sort of proud sense of injustice, and preparing to take them back. —

"Stay! — stay! You young geniuses are so hasty! I don't say the things are absolutely without merit — oh, no! But, then, what's the use of merit that don't sell?"

"True. Will you give me them back again?"

"Don't be in such a hurry. What do you ask for them? I know they will hang among my things for ages — probably for ever — but I don't care; I love to encourage modest merit. What do you ask?"

"What will you give?"

"Why, the frames must have cost you something?"

Du Chastel named how much.

"That's enormous; you have been imposed upon in that article, sir. However, I never stickle for trifles — say the frames and a couple of guineas each over and above for the pictures; and I think you may boast you have made a tolerably good bargain. Why, I have known artists keep pictures for years, on which they have expended the labour of years, and no purchaser."

The frames must be paid for at all events, and he must live as he could upon the remainder, and the sale, from time to time, of a few studies. It was hard work, but his greatest anxiety was to conceal his distress from his father.

He, at that period of his life, has been known to subsist for weeks upon sixpence a-day — two penny-worth of milk and the rest in bread — rather than risk

the incurring of debts which his father might have to pay; and yet he laboured on.

It was with him, as with many like him, a life of alternations between a feverish hope, and, when exhausted by labour, the depths of despondency and despair. Still he persevered. It was a beautiful and interesting spectacle, had there been any one to witness it; but there was not. He became more beautiful than ever, with that sort of transcendant beauty which we almost worship in the young Raphael, mingled with the tender sensibility of the Domenichino. The life of abstinence and privation in which he had so long persisted, had seemed, as it does in some but rather rare instances, to increase his beauty. His features were spiritualized rather than attenuated; the fire of his eyes was softened by a languor which only rendered them the more interesting; and there was a melancholy sweetness in his smile which was touching beyond expression.

But better days are at hand.

I have introduced you once before to Mr. Marston, and now that gentleman is going to appear again.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Patience, accomplish thy work, accomplish thy work of affection!

Sorrow and silence are strong and patient — Endurance is godlike."

EVANGELINE.

You have had a glimpse, as I said, of Mr. Marston before, and he appeared in the character of a hard-fisted, hard-headed, and probably hard-hearted money-getter.

A man whose business in life it was to acquire wealth.

In this you will expect to hear that he succeeded, as most hard-fisted and hard-headed men do, when they give themselves up to the pursuit of this object.

But Mr. Marston was not one of your mere money-getters. He was a man of imagination in his way, as men of ability usually are, even though their minds are apparently devoted to the most ordinary and sordid pursuits. He gathered money, not with intent to hoard, but to spend; and he had very good dispositions for making a free spender, as well as a hard getter.

For one thing, he loved fine scenery, and especially romantic scenery.

As a boy, he had revelled in the wildest romances. And he had, in accordance with these tastes, purchased for himself, as was said, one of the loveliest spots to be

found in the north of England, but in so secluded a situation, that it was rarely visited.

It had once been an ancient abbey, sequestered with the rest by Henry the Eighth, but not destroyed. It had been preserved much in its original state, and lay there, surrounded by its ancient woods, upon the border of a stream, or rather small lake, of unrivalled beauty.

Mr. Marston was at this time busy adorning and improving it — not in the purest taste, perhaps, for, because he had imagination, it did not follow that he had taste — two very different things. However, taste or no taste, he was adding to and adorning his abbey, according to his own ideas, assisted by the advice of a professional architect, who felt it to be advisable to yield in many things to the conceptions of a very inventive imagination belonging to a very conceited man.

Among other matters, Mr. Marston had lately been dwelling, with much satisfaction, upon the idea of adorning the walls of a fine saloon, which he had just added to his abbey, with paintings upon the panels, of a gay and festive character, to be executed by a really good artist.

But as, according to the style in which he wished his design to be carried out, the expense of employing men of high and settled reputation would be vastly too enormous even for his notions — he had been searching about for some young man of unquestionable, but as yet

unacknowledged, talent, who at a moderate charge might be willing to undertake the business; holding out as it did the prospect, besides the present remuneration, of proving a means of introducing him into general notice.

So, in confirmity with this plan, Mr. Marston did that which people will not usually take the trouble of doing. Instead of confiding the commission to others, he chose to look out for himself, and began peering about the lower tiers of the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, where he knew by experience such things as he was in quest of, were usually to be found. Pictures that escape general observation, and yet among which, one sometimes stumbles upon very beautiful little things.

The paintings of Armand Du Chastel thus humbly placed, had attracted Mr. Marston's attention. They were, as I have told you, full of real merit; of great beauty and originality of design, and finished with a most careful and conscientious patience.

The great man — the man of immense wealth and consequent consideration in the circle to which he belonged — sought out the studio of the penniless artist.

The great man of to-day condescended to visit the man of ages.

It is a strange reflection, how, whilst we are all alive together, the one — even with the most high-minded among us — seems to outshine and obscure the other. We all seem to be in need of gold frames, and the richer the better.

And few, I fear, have a right to cast a stone at their fellow-creatures for this weakness. — Who can lay his hand upon his heart, and say he is altogether free from it? That he is never dazzled by the circumstances which surround the man, into a false appreciation of the man himself? More or less, every one in his degree thus bows to Mammon, “and gives to dust, which is a little gilt, more laud than gilt o’er dusted.”

The thing is as old as Shakspeare — as old as the world.

The great man of to-day was a tall, handsome, well-filled figure, remarkably well — that is to say, handsomely — dressed, and had an air of conscious importance, without any great approach to offensive arrogance, which was imposing. His manner was indeed just what the manner of a consciously great man, according to his ideas, should be. Kind and encouraging, without the appearance of *much* condescension.

Mr. Marston was obliged to stoop his lofty head as he entered the low garret, which served the youthful painter as a studio, and paused upon the threshold for a moment or two.

He had wished to surprise the man of genius at his work, so he had taken the liberty to raise the latch of the door — it was only a latch — and to enter without knocking.

The young painter, pale and exhausted, his cheek slightly tinged with the hectic of fatigue; his fine fair

hair dishevelled, and as if pushed hastily away from his forehead — sat before his easel, a little thrown back in his chair, intently gazing upon the composition before him; so completely, indeed, was he absorbed in thought, that he appeared not to have heard the door open.

The patron of art remained for some moments silently regarding the scene.

The little room was, as we know, scantily furnished; a few old chairs, an old table, and in a remote corner, a miserable trundle bed. All the rest was given to art — half-finished pictures, innumerable sketches, busts, models, and a few engravings — paints, canvass, frames, were huddled together in confusion — but in the half-finished pictures, and still more in the bold and vigorous sketches, instinct with life and passion, the hand of one of Nature's chosen ones was visible.

The subject upon the easel was one at once original and pathetic, but to do justice by which would be evidently a matter of great difficulty, requiring all the higher requisites of the painter in an extraordinary degree. It was evident that the young aspirant to excellence was grappling with a subject to which his powers at the present stage of attainment were unequal; and it was equally evident that it was the sense of this which now occupied him painfully.

Thrown a little back, as I have said, he gazed some time at the canvass before him; then with a heavy sigh, he rose, pushed back his chair, and turned with an ex-

pression of something like disgust away. As he did so, he started at seeing the tall, important figure standing just within his threshold.

There was a glance round the room, a sudden flush to the cheek, as the too sensitive pulses beat high and quick; then a bow and a courteous gesture, which welcomed the stranger to the apartment.

"I have to beg your pardon, Mr. Du Chastel, for interrupting you in this uncereemonious manner," Mr. Marston began, "but I will trust to your forgiveness. I have an introduction from Sir C. D., who spoke in the highest terms of your promise of future excellence, and warmly approved my design of applying to you to execute a little commission for me."

"Sir C. D. is kind and generous."

And as he said this, Armand presented his only unoccupied chair to his guest, seating himself upon a low stool, from which he cleared sundry portfolios, and sheets of paper covered over with sketches.

"I see you surrounded by the proofs of the fertile genius of which I have heard much," began the patron. "May I be allowed to look?" taking up several sheets of paper, which lay in a confused heap upon the table. "The designs are undoubtedly very fine.....as to the execution....."

"Ah, there it is! shall I ever get over my innumerable defects in execution?" and again he sighed. "It seems," he added, with a somewhat bitter smile, "that I

am fated never to content myself; then how can I be such a fool as to suppose that I should give satisfaction to other people."

"That you do not content yourself," said Mr. Marston, with more kindness of manner, and more real discrimination than is common to all patrons, "is the exact reason why you should expect to succeed, and why doubtless you will. In fact, you *do* please many — myself among the number. Those small pictures of yours in the third room of the Somerset House Exhibition, and which are hung close upon the floor, in the left-hand corner, have attracted me much."

A sudden gleam of sunshine brightened the countenance of the young man.

They were the first words of encouragement and hope which had greeted him for a long time.

"You are very good — too partial — too good. Those little pictures! It is true, they were favourites of my own — those little pictures!... With what pleasure, and yet with what anxious care, I had worked at them! how I had touched and re-touched — studied and re-studied. I thought not one single creature had even looked at them."

"They were unfortunately hung; but I am one who usually go over the lower tier. Do you think..." looking round — "I do not see any more here exactly in the same manner... but do you think you could, with equal ardour and pleasure, and I hope without the risk

of so much disappointment, undertake to paint a series of pictures 'in the same style for me?'"

The eyes of the young artist glistened.

"Could! — a series of pictures? — and in the same style! Oh yes! I would do my best! if you should honour me so far as to give me a commission — if you would do me the favour to try me."

"Why, the matter is briefly this: — I have a place down in Lancashire, which I bought some years ago. A wild, savage sort of country lies about it; but around the house the scene is of a different character. It belonged to an abbey of Augustine monks in the good old times; and those fathers had an eye to the *dulce* as well as to the *utile*. But let that be; I am fond of the thing, and have lately been adding considerably to it. Among other rooms wanted was a saloon, of sufficient dimensions to please me — a sort of banquetting room, you understand."

Armand did not in the least, but he bowed.

"My wish is to have the walls of this apartment painted in panels — arabesques, something in the light, fanciful taste of the halls of the Vatican, and each panel to contain an original picture, united by a certain harmony of design. It struck me, when I saw those two choice little bits of yours, that you were just my man. The grace and delicacy with which the flowers are painted — the really exquisite vividness and lightness of the colouring — the elegance of the figures — in short,

the thing is just what I want; and Sir C. D. assures me, I could not do better than follow the instinct which led me to fix upon you. But perhaps you will hardly condescend to be a painter upon walls. Care will be taken, however, I must add, by an ingenious plan contrived by my architect, that what we may call the more important part of the paintings — the groups of figures — shall be so managed that they could in case of necessity be detached from the walls. So that I should hope no difficulty will arise upon that score."

But the cheek of Du Chastel was already burning with pleasure.

What a perspective opening to the young, fervent enthusiast was this! Sick of the huge prison of London, its smoke, and noise, and endless wilderness of streets, he was invited to go down into a far county, and exchange all this, for verdure and fresh air, and the pleasant sound of trees, and birds, and flowers. He was to work upon subjects of his own choice, in a spacious apartment, in place of his low-roofed, smoky workshop; to be called upon — entitled to give free course to an imagination which was absolutely teeming with images.

He felt he could do it — should do it well.

Those whom he had already pleased with the first-fruits of his fancy, he felt assured he could satisfy still more completely under such advantageous circumstances. This commission seemed made for him.

It required a style far less ambitious than that of the

difficult design he was at work upon, and which he felt himself at home in. Moreover, the practice and readiness of execution he should obtain from the employment, would prepare him for greater attempts on his return.

He turned to Mr. Marston, and thanked him with a sweetness peculiarly his own; modestly expressing his hope that he might be able to do something more, to please one who had already been so good as to be pleased.

Mr. Marston was content to be thanked for being pleased, and liked the young artist for being grateful.

It is an odd world, to be sure — when the man who is pleased expects to be thanked by the man who has pleased him.

Painful sacrifice on the part of the amateur, to allow himself to be pleased! at least, so it would appear, if one may judge by the pains people take to find reasons for being *displeased* — but so wags the world.

At least, so wags the world of to-day. The to-morrow sets these things more right.

Terms were next to be treated of.

Mr. Marston was not exactly mean — he was fond of being magnificent, yet he loved a bargain. Men who have made their own money, usually unite these contradictions. So he talked in a *grandiose* rather splendid style; and made the young painter what appeared to him a reasonable offer.

Handsome as regarded so young a man, — whom it

suited the patron, for the nonce, to look upon as a mere youth; and yet decidedly cheap, compared to what he had been taught to expect any artist of assured reputation would require. But cheap or not, Armand was more than contented.

The patron and the artist parted well satisfied with each other; and young Du Chastel immediately set about making his arrangements to start, without delay, for Donnington Abbey.

CHAPTER XV.

“Where through leaves the sunshine gliding,
Deep with gold the woodland stains;
Smooth-mown lawns and deep green meads. . . .”

W. C. BENNETT.

DONNINGTON ABBEY was, in truth, a charming place; situated, as the old imaginative servants of God loved to place their conventual houses, in days before priests and monks had become contaminated by that world — that mysterious, evil world, against which we are so strenuously warned — and were yet earnest, single-minded, God-fearing, God-seeking men, who sought in the silence of the wilderness to dedicate their hearts to the Infinite.

Donnington Abbey stood in a beautiful secluded vale, upon the green sward of rich pasture land, which gently declined to a softly-flowing river of considerable breadth, and clear as crystal; its blue, riband-like meanderings

contrasting sweetly with the fresh green of the meadows, and the more sombre verdure of the surrounding woods.

Trees of vast antiquity and magnificent growth formed the background to the abbey, climbing the surrounding steeps which shut this lovely valley in, and in stately groups adorning the surrounding meadows, or rather park.

Noble oaks, the growth of centuries; tall elms, with their beautiful circular heads, of which Claude Lorraine is so fond; enormous beeches; and the lofty spires of the Italian poplar — gave a peculiar beauty and life to the picture.

The valley, widening at the further end, allowed a glimpse of a rich champaign country, and blue mountains in the distant horizon; so that nothing was wanting to the loveliness of the colouring. But the world seemed far away, and it was as if no thoughts but those of peace and piety could intrude into this tranquil scene.

The flowing river, the sighing wind among the huge tree-tops, the cattle reposing in the meadows by the water, where the grass stood fetlock deep; — the flocks of sheep, the bleating of the lambs — the water breaking over the wheel of the abbey mill at some little distance; the rooks slowly returning home, the cooing of the cushat doves among the woods, whilst the sun was slowly descending over the distant mountains, and pouring a pale golden flood of light upon the landscape!

— It is not easy to imagine anything more formed to tranquillize and to enrapture at once.

And it was thus that the abode in which he was to pass several weeks, was first presented to Du Chastel's eyes. Every artist is essentially a poet.

The sculptor, the painter, the musician, the mighty master of verse — it matters not, the same voice of inspiration breathes through all.

How exquisite was the sense with which our young man drank in all this beauty. Beauty not only of lights, and forms, and colours, but of sounds — for the sweet natural concert of suggestive voices, the murmuring evening wind among the trees, the sucking of the water in the mill wheel, the notes of bird and beast, and of human peaceful business, came mingling from below, as he looked down upon the lovely picture presented to him.

Every sense was thrilling with pleasure, the very air seemed to have a peculiar sweetness in it, for the balmy softness of a summer evening lent its enchantment to the rest.

The sun, as I have said, was about to go down, and was sending forth a stream of his departing glory, tinting the tops of the trees, casting long shadows on the gleaming grass and water, and gilding the roofs, peaks, and pinnacles of that abbey, which lay there so grave and still, amid its verdant meadows and calmly flowing waters.

He had quitted the coach about half a mile away, and having directed the heavier part of his luggage to be despatched after him, carrying a small haversack flung over his shoulders, he had descended to the gentle declivity before which this tender scene of peace lay reposing.

Never had he beheld anything like this before. His heart swelled with an ecstasy of love, admiration, and gratitude at once.

Now he stood still and gazed at the tints of the distance, melting under this flood of softened light; then upon the blue and flowing water, then upon the noble groups of trees, then upon the white fronts and pinnacles of the abbey, as it peered through these woods.

Tall trees were waving above and around it, upon which the rooks, which he had watched slowly winging their way through the sky, were now settling for the night.

Thus he loitered and delayed, unwilling to break through the sweet enchantment of the moment — unwilling to leave the harmony of internal thought, to meet he knew not what — at all events, strangers; for such alone should he encounter at the abbey.

But time rolls on, and forces the loitering pilgrim on his way — so passing from one lovely changing landscape to another, as he descended, he found himself at last standing upon the fair green-sward between the front of the abbey and the water.

The abbey was, so far as its exterior features went, still an abbey. Mr. Marston, though without ancestors himself, was not insensible to that sort of supposititious ancestry which attaches to the mere possession of a venerable antique place and property. He was too proud of Donnington Abbey, both as a matter of taste and a matter of antiquity, to allow of any great change in the character of its principal features, though he had sinned against good taste in his banquetting room, which would have better suited an Italian palace than a monastery of Augustine monks. However this addition was not visible where Armand now stood, admiring the building, with its low Gothic arched door, its lancet windows, its pinnacled turrets, and all the intricate and beautiful outlines of Gothic architecture, now thrown into strong relief by the setting sun, the effect of the whole being much enhanced by the contrast with the lofty trees that stood on each side of it.

The stone of which the edifice was built had preserved much of its original whiteness in the pure air of the place where it stood, which Time, with the almost insensible touches of his slow but persevering pencil, had mellowed into the tender beauty of serene old age.

I can scarcely forbear falling into the poetic vein myself, as my memory recalls the lovely scene.

After a little pause, Armand approached what seemed to be the entrance, where a flight of low steps,

and upon which several large pots of orange trees were ranged, rose from the turf. He was somewhat startled, however, to find two ladies sitting there. They had been hidden from him by the orange trees.

It was all that was wanting to complete the picture to a painter's eye — human forms, to give spirit and life to the landscape — and better could scarcely have been chosen.

A girl, whose tall, slender figure had in it a something remarkably graceful, with long tresses of auburn hair flowing round her neck and shoulders, was sitting upon the upper step, accompanied by a dark brunette, some years older than herself, whose black sparkling eyes, shining like two diamonds, and raven hair contrasted very agreeably with the delicate complexion of her companion.

The first young lady wore a large hat, with broad blue ribands hanging down upon each side, a mode revived in our present day, and beneath it a profusion of fine silken hair shaded the loveliest of faces. The features might yet, perhaps, scarcely have reached their full perfection; but there is something in this early youth, almost, perhaps, more lovely than the full maturity of beauty.

Blue eyes, large and intelligent, and still with that half-childish surprise and *mutinerie* in them, which is so pretty; a mouth with full lips, of the colour of the brightest damask rose, a complexion literally of the de-

licacy of wax, or of the lily, which you will; long slender arms, a figure lythe and flexible. There she sat in her large hat and simple dress, leaning over the brown lady, who was her French governess, and reading out of the same book — which was..... A very, very, high-flown romantic novel, of the Madame Cotin school.

The two ladies were so intent upon their occupation, that Du Chastel had approached pretty near, before they were aware of it; then they both started, and raising their heads, beheld the young man.

At which vision the eyes of the brown lady sparkled, and those of the fair girl fell.

Our young artist, we know, was used to good manners, and the habits of his childhood were not obliterated in him, so he felt neither nervous nor awkward. Reserved and modest he was — but always master of himself.

Armand approached, taking off his hat, and saluting these two beauties, whom in his fancy he was at that moment likening to some Rosamanda or Fiammetta, in the Decamerone — with an air of deference and a something of ancient gallantry united, which his foreign extraction, or perhaps his fanciful imaginings gave him. He most respectfully inquired whether this was the proper way for him to enter by, or whether there was another, by which he ought to have approached the house.

He added, that he was the bearer of a letter of introduction from Mr. Marston, who, possibly, had already been good enough to write and announce his arrival.

The young ladies looked at each other, as they rose from the steps to return the salute, and the brunette, addressing him in very tolerable English, prettily modified by a foreign accent, said, that she thought Mrs. Allardice (the English governess) had received a letter to that effect from Mr. Marston, by something she had let fall the day before.

Perhaps the stranger was the gentleman whom Mr. Marston spoke of as about to proceed to Donnington Abbey, to ornament the drawing-room with designs from the Decamerone.

Precisely so, — and Armand drew forth his letter.

The young French lady, who possessed one of the most vagrant hearts in the world, had already half lost it to the handsome stranger; and on discovering his errand, she had very naturally appropriated him to herself.

She held out her hand to receive the missive, with a very gracious air; whilst the fair girl, her companion, stood there, never once lifting up her beautiful blue eyes, but keeping them fixed upon the ground, remaining perfectly passive, and not attempting to utter a syllable — either through pride or shyness, it was difficult to tell which. Mademoiselle was not ill pleased to have all the talking devolve on herself.

"You are not exactly right," she said, in answer to Du Chastel's inquiry. "People don't usually come to this door. You see there is no carriage-road up here. Mr. Marston turned the drive another way, that the turf might fall unbroken from the steps to the river; but it's all one now — pray come in. We can call a servant to take your bag, and I will introduce you myself to Mrs. Allardice, to whom, I see, this letter is addressed."

And so, making way for the young lady to precede her, which she did without hesitation, Mademoiselle mounted the steps, and they entered the abbey under the richly-ornamented door, and found themselves beneath the arches of a low gothic hall of immense extent, lighted by long narrow windows of painted glass, the blue, crimson, and amber of which threw masses of colour upon the black and white marble beneath their feet. The light figure floated before him under the arches of this mysterious-looking hall, and he thought of Una, in the palace of some enchanter, or of an angel vision pointing the way — in short, of all sorts of fantastical and fanciful images, for he was quite in a visionary state. So full was he of wonderment, admiration, and delight, that he was scarcely himself, and so lost in all he saw, that he gave much less heed, I fear, than he ought to have done, to the agreeable and civil things poured forth by the voluble young French woman at his side.

At last, after traversing this large hall, they came to

where it branched off into a low-arched gallery or passage, with small windows on one side, giving into a paved court, round about which this arched passage ran. Down this the fair guiding vision proceeded some way, until at last she stopped before a dark oak door, which opening, displayed a low, shady apartment of considerable extent, with small arched diamond casement windows, set in stone frames, the light of which was additionally tempered by a vine, which ran mantling all round and over these casement windows, enwreathing them with its large transparent green leaves.

The room was hung with dark green damask; dark green chairs, in frames of black carved oak, carved tables, and book-cases of the same material, composed the furniture. There was a wide open fire-place, with a high sculptured mantel-piece; the tables were covered, some with books, some with embroidery frames, and some had writing and drawing materials upon them. An air of seclusion, shade, and quiet business pervaded this room, at the upper end of which a rather formidable-looking lady was seated, in a high-backed oaken chair, with a book before her. This stately and somewhat starched dignitary Mademoiselle introduced as Mrs. Allardice. The head governess bowed with a gravity and seriousness in the true spirit of her part, and which might not have ill become even the lady abbess of the community, if this chamber had still been, what it once was, the parlour of a religious house.

The lady looked surprised rather than pleased at the entrance of her charge, accompanied by a remarkably handsome and charming-looking young man, of only a few years above her own age. She rose, and made a distant salute, whilst Mademoiselle Fierville, for that was the French lady's name, took upon herself the office of introducer.

"Mrs. Allardice, Mr. — Mr. — —?"

Turning round and looking for an answer.

"Du Chastel."

Upon which, a slight start and shiver, imperceptible to every one else, passed over the young lady; and retreating to a window at some little distance behind Mrs. Allardice, she sat down and remained there a good deal hidden by the folds of the curtain and the dark branches of the vine, which there almost totally obscured the casement.

"Mr. Du Chastel, the bearer of a letter of introduction from Mr. Marston. Here it is."

And Mademoiselle presented the letter which Armand had already put into her hand.

Mrs. Allardice, taking the missive, and with a certain ceremony signing to the artist to be seated, resumed her chair, whilst Mademoiselle Fierville stood by the table, attentive to all that passed. As to the young lady, from her place at the window, it would be difficult to denote whether she heard and heeded, or whether she neither heard nor heeded what was going on. She had placed

herself behind Mrs. Allardice, as I said, so that this lady, occupied with the matter in hand, did not at the moment recollect her presence, or I think she might already, in her duenna-like caution and suspicion, alike the torment and business of her life, have ordered the young lady and Mademoiselle also out of the room.

She was, however, at present engrossed in reading the letter, which, having done twice over, she folded the paper with much deliberation, and then with a brow not altogether unruffled, she began with some formality.

“Mr. Armand Du Chastel, I presume. Mr. Marston writes me that he has engaged with you to undertake the decoration of the large saloon with compositions from the Decamerone of Boccacio, a task for which your genius and powers of composition and execution render you admirably fitted,” with an inclination intended to be complimentary. “He introduces you also to my notice as a man of amiable talents, and the highest reputation in all respects, and bespeaks for you our regard and best offices. I shall be happy to comply with Mr. Marston’s wishes. Your profession would entitle you to the best attention of all lovers of art; but I understand by this,” glancing at the letter, “that Mr. Du Chastel has still higher claims, being of an ancient and honourable descent, but reduced by adverse circumstances —”

“To be an artist,” said Armand, bluntly. He had not known exactly how to look during this harangue. “Yes, madam,” with a slightly sarcastic smile, “reduced,

as you say, to be an artist. It is a great fall, assuredly, from the privilege of doing nothing; but I beg your pardon," recovering himself, "I love my profession."

Mrs. Allardice looked rather reprehendingly surprised at this little outburst, but the eyes of Mademoiselle Fierville sparkled.

A man of honourable descent! and so handsome! and so enthusiastic! thought she.

"It is always an advantage to be well descended," continued Mrs. Allardice, with great dignity; "as for this enthusiasm for art, I may be allowed, perhaps, in some degree, to differ. The moral and the useful I have always deemed the true objects of pursuit for every well-disposed mind."

Armand made a slight bow, which seemed to say "I stand corrected." He did not feel inclined to pursue the subject farther; but Mademoiselle Fierville now put in with —

"Ah, Mrs. Allardice! that is so like you; and what a drab-coloured world it would be if you might have it your own way."

Mrs. Allardice looked as she often looked, but always in vain, as if she would have crushed Mademoiselle with a glance for her audacity; but the lively Frenchwoman cared little for looks, and less for old prudes as she designated the worthy Allardice, and she rattled on.

"Only good and useful! just consider! I wonder what all the beautiful things and beautiful people are made

for, if one is only to think about goodness and usefulness? I look upon beauty as the most precious of things, and upon the cultivation of it as the most noble of arts." And she glanced at Armand for encouragement and approbation.

He was spared the necessity of giving or withholding either, by the entrance of a footman to announce tea, upon which Mrs. Allardice rose, and said rather stiffly —

"Mr. Marston has been pleased to mention in his letter" ... stopping herself, she added ... "but perhaps Mr. Du Chastel has not dined?"

Now it appears that Mr. Marston had suggested in his letter, that in his opinion it would be superfluous to keep an additional table for the use of the young artist. The rich man was, as I have hinted, fond of magnificence, and yet, like many others I have known, he liked to be as little expensive in his magnificence as it conveniently might be; and it had struck him that as Du Chastel's claims to an honourable descent, of which he made mention in his letter, forbade his being introduced into the steward's-room, and as he was quite admissible to be set down at the table kept for the three ladies, he might — to spare the necessity of another for himself — as well be invited to take a place at theirs; and this he had accordingly, much to Mrs. Allardice's dissatisfaction, requested that lady to arrange.

"But perhaps Mr. Du Chastel has not dined?" was

answered by the assurance that he had. Whereupon, of necessity, followed a somewhat grim invitation to join the ladies at tea.

Grim or not, it was accepted, of course; and the little party prepared to adjourn to a small drawing-room in which the tea was served, and which was appropriated to the use of Miss Marston and her governesses. And so the young lady who had sat motionless as a statue, rose, and again walking first out of the room, seated herself beside Mrs. Allardice at the tea-table.

Armand found himself sitting with the beautiful vision — nothing more or less, in fact, than an extremely beautiful but shy and rather haughty-looking girl, drinking tea and eating bread and butter.

Her voice, however, he was scarcely privileged to hear at all; for she spoke only once or twice during the meal, and that only when it was absolutely necessary. A silence which Mrs. Allardice evidently encouraged and approved; and which Mademoiselle Fierville was far too busily employed in talking herself even to notice.

But Armand perceived and felt it.

It seemed as if this evidently proud girl was displeased at his being thus admitted to make one of the company. And he, in his turn, began to feel offended and uneasy.

But there was no remedy.

Where the master of the house had placed him,

there it was his business to be; and once at work, he might make his presence there as short as possible.

It was curious how this fine girl's beauty lost of its charms seen through the medium of mortified self-love.

It was the first time since the ruin of his house, that Du Chastel had ever met with humiliation in this precise form. He had borne all the more vulgar contempts and buffets of fortune, which every man must make up his mind to, who has to rough it and earn his bread; but he had fancied, with the usual credulity of a generous and delicate mind, that when brought into contact with those his equals in education and refinement, and with whom he, till lately, had been equal in fortune, he should meet with none of this degrading scorn.

Not only, that no one in that class would be so unpolite as to shew, but that it would never enter into their heads to feel, a difference, or think of meeting him but upon terms of perfect equality.

That the painful lesson should be first taught him by an angel like this, was mortifying.

But at least she ceased at once to be an angel in his eyes, and fell immediately to the ordinary class of beautiful women of which he had seen thousands.

Once he had looked at her as she sat there, her eyes bent upon her tea-cup; and with, as he thought,

a most disdainful curve on her very beautiful lips. He turned away, but was bewitched to look again.

At that moment she suddenly raised her head, and their eyes met, but hers were instantly withdrawn; and she looked that way no more. Yet, if he could have observed her, which he would not, for he was not inclined to take the trouble again, he might have seen what would have a little surprised him; but he perceived it not, and nobody else did.

Mrs. Allardice was one of those slow, stiff, stupid models of propriety, who never see anything but what lies straight before them. The haughty reserve of Miss Marston's manner was greatly to her satisfaction; and she thought it impossible for a young lady to acquit herself better in what she confessed to herself was an awkward position.

"How strange of Mr. Marston, it was," she thought. "One should have imagined him the last man in the world to permit such a thing; but men were so odd, there was no understanding them."

Mrs. Allardice had only brevet rank as Mrs., and thus she pursued her reflections —

"Happily, the sweet girl has been brought up to a proper sense of her own social position, and it really is gratifying to see the manner in which she understands how to assert her dignity in the proper place."

As for Mademoiselle Fierville, she thought of nothing but the delight of having the field thus left to herself;

and she determined to improve the opportunity, and forthwith begin a living romance after the most approved pattern, the materials for which lay so opportunely to her hand.

* * * * *

So soon as she had finished her cup of tea, Miss Marston rose and delivered Du Chastel from the sort of irritated vexation which he was scolding himself for feeling; as bidding him good evening with considerable formality, yet in a voice whose tones were sweetness itself, she left the room and retired to the one in which we first found her. This apartment would have been called a school-room in most houses, but in this it was designated as the ladies' room, being common to Miss Marston and her two governesses; there she threw herself into a comfortable chair by the window, and drawing a candle-stand towards her, took up a book apparently with intent to read.

But she did not read much.

Indeed, Evelyn Marston was not very extravagantly given to reading anything but Mademoiselle Fierville's French novels. These she devoured. Not, to do her justice, for the love part of the story so much as for her delight in the vivid pictures, whether of scenery or of the passions, presented to her.

The beauty of these she understood and fully entered into; but more solid reading she had little taste for. They had not been properly cultivated, or, I believe, her

abilities would have proved equal to anything; and her mind was naturally of that stamp which would have instinctively fed upon the best and most nourishing food, had such been offered.

But what was to be expected from such a governess as Mrs. Allardice? Simply, that the pupil took a dislike to all by her recommended, and very often merely because she recommended it. Solid reading, as she called it, the lady was sure to prescribe, though perhaps without any very well-defined idea of what she meant by the term; therefore solid reading immediately took the form of a very considerable bore to Miss Marston's imagination. And few things disgusted her more than so virtuous and unexceptionable a manner of spending time.

Miss Marston had wandered about in her father's library — which was chiefly a bookseller's furnished one; but there was one corner filled with old books, which had been purchased with the abbey, that she delighted in.

Old ballads, old romances, old travels, these had been the charm of her solitary hours till Mademoiselle Fierville arrived with her French romances, and then they went quite out of favour.

There she at present sits, however, with a volume of Hume's History of England in her hand, over which she spends a little yawning time every day, out of submission to Mrs. Allardice's wishes; but she was never in

a worse humour for such studies than this night, for you cannot think how beautiful the moon was, riding in mid heaven, and pouring floods of white light upon the trees, and the grass, and the water!

Those woods looked so dark and mysterious — how often had she longed to walk in them by moonlight; but that was absolutely forbidden.

“Ladies to walk in the woods alone at that hour! Impossible!”

She might only go there with her father — as if her father was a man to take a moonlight walk — and as if her father was a man to enjoy a moonlight walk with.

Oh, how beautiful! beautiful it was! How horrid to be mewed up in this way.

She had only to open the casement and jump down. It was not more than a foot and a half from the ground.

How often she had been tempted to do this, and yet she never had. Something in that quiet silence of moonlight seemed to withhold her. She did not dislike a lark — a little bit of bread eaten in secret was a nice thing enough. She had once or twice, rarely, however, it ought to be said, known the taste of it — but by this holy moonlight...

No, she could not.

She opened the window and gazed out wistfully. Those deep, solemn-looking trees, and that pale, holy

moon, and the wind breathing so stilly; and those bright, sparkling, lustrous stars — that large white planet just setting over the western woods.

Oh, how beautiful!

And no one to speak to — no one to tell how beautiful it was!

What loneliness of life!

She wondered why she was so silent at tea.

She hoped she did not seem proud; that would be very bad in her — but she was bewildered, she thought.

Du Chastel! How singular!

Of all the names in the world, *that*.

She hoped she had not been very rude — but she was afraid he thought so. When their eyes had met, what a strange expression there was in his — he looked offended and disappointed.

“But what right had *he* to be offended or disappointed?”

Du Chastel! — but what mattered it if his name was Du Chastel? what right had he to assume upon that?

“Nonsense!”

“Oh, beautiful! beautiful planet! How often and often have I seen you setting behind those woods, and in all your glory of loveliness — and upon such nights as this — and still, alone — alone — alone.

“It was curious that his name should be Du Chastel;

but Fierville fills me with her novels till I am growing a fool. I don't think I will read any more of them."

* * * * *

And now this gifted, but spoiled girl, has gone up to bed, and you shall have a glimpse at this lover of holy moon-lights and glorious planets, and all the stilly awfulness of night in her chamber.

It was such a room.

Her father, proud of his beautiful daughter and heiress, had been lavish here. Nothing had been spared that could be purchased with money to adorn it.

Everything to gratify pride, or minister to luxury — those too hateful influences — or that could create a love and habit of expense, and teach the false estimate of value by cost, was there.

Everything, in short, that could give a false direction to a naturally ingenuous and noble mind, was here collected together, as if the very tempter himself had been at hand to blind, corrupt, and destroy.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
The various offerings of the world appear;
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box."

RAPE OF THE LOCK.

THE suite, for suite it might be called, of apartments which Miss Marston called peculiarly her own, consisted of an ante-room, bed-room, and dressing-room, to which may be added a small chamber upon one side for her maid.

These rooms were situated at the end of one of the long, arched galleries, which were carried round the small square court occupying the centre of the building.

The passage was low and antique, but the rooms themselves had either been enlarged and beautiful to suit the demands of modern taste, or had been adapted to that scale of ease and luxury which was assumed by the superiors of the higher descriptions of the monastic orders.

The ante-room was separated from the gallery by swinging doors, covered with scarlet cloth, which prepared you for nothing extraordinary within; but once entered, it was a little scene of enchantment.

It was a small octagonal room, painted in the gayest manner in panels; with flowers, and birds, and grotesques; it had gilded cornices and beadings. A few beautiful casts from the antique, placed on pedestals,

filled up the intervals between the panels; low couches, covered with a soft, rose-coloured silk, stood round; and in the centre of the room, a fine vase of Maltese stone, at that time esteemed a rarity of great value, was filled with a living bouquet of exotics, and which literally perfumed the apartment.

There were the ever-lovely myrtles, covered with bloom, and heliotropes, and gardenias, and geraniums, and many flowers now out of date, but then cultivated with the greatest pride and care. A beautiful bouquet they formed, lighted as they were by a lamp of crystal and ormolu, which hung from the ceiling, and shed a soft, shadowy gleam round the room.

Two doors presented themselves, one leading to the bed-room, the other to the dressing-room, which communicated with each other besides.

We will enter by the dressing-room.

It was an apartment not very large, but exquisitely fitted up.

The hangings were of rose-coloured silk and white muslin, arranged in the beautiful taste in these matters which belonged to the days of Louis Quinze. They were looped up with cords and tassels of gold and silk, and had rich fringes of the same. The chairs were white and gold, fancifully painted with delicate and gay flowers, like cups of Sevres china, a rich collection of which adorned the consoles and chimney-piece. The whole was pleasantly lighted by wax candles. Fine

mirrors, reaching from the ceiling to the floor, reflected the pretty scene, which was enlivened by two or three gilded cages, containing one or two rare parrots, all blue, scarlet, and yellow; a macaw with a blue crest, and the loveliest little emerald-green paroquet in the world. In a pretty basket, lined with silk, lay a miniature lion — a small dog, almost exactly a diminutive of the royal beast, at that time of almost priceless value from its rarity, and only to be now seen in old prints, or stuffed in old museums.

China vases filled with flowers, Chinese fans, Chinese mandarins, ivory carvings, India cabinets, and all sorts of rich and curious things that a taste, whim, or a passion for idle expense could bring together, filled up the rest of the room.

The window was open, and before it was a wide, most luxurious silken couch; and opposite to this a large chair to bury oneself in.

The toilette was not, however, displayed. She liked to have all that in her bed-room, into which you entered by a doorway hung with a double *portière* of velvet. And there stood the bed of rich blue, and gold, and white muslin, in the prettiest of alcoves, with snowy linen, and counterpane of white Lyons silk, embroidered with natural flowers. And then there was the toilette, with its elaborate draperies of flowered muslin, lined with pink silk; and its glass in a silver filagree frame, adorned in the manner of a lady's head-dress with gauzes

and ribands; and the silver and gold filagree toilette boxes, and the China little dishes, cups, and jars; and the smelling-bottles of every hue and fantastical shape, cut and glittering like diamonds. There was a splendid bouquet in the fire-place, in lieu of fire, it being summer; and the snowy marble chimney-piece was carved with the Marriage of Cupid and Psyche, and the oval glass over it was adorned, its gold branches of wild flowers and ears of corn, and its gilded vine-leaves wandering and running all round it. The dressing-gown of fine India muslin, and the slippers of pink, embroidered with gold, were standing prepared, with every other article needed for the night, all in an equally luxurious and equally elaborate style.

Something too much of this; but I wish you to picture to yourselves how this girl had been accustomed to live — it is a part of her history.

Up-stairs she came, and through her ante-room, without even casting her eye upon anything, and into her dressing-room she went.

“No window open!”

“How tiresome she is! She *will* shut the window before I come up! It makes it so close — it quite smells of the birds. I can’t think why I keep them here; but one wants something to talk to.

“Shock! Oh, well, you’re fast asleep! Never mind, little fool — you have no affection in you! You don’t care an atom for your mistress! Get a good supper, go

to sleep, and snarl all the more the next morning — that's what you live for.

"What's this? Oh! the cup and saucer my father promised me, in place of the one he broke the last time he came up here."

A small box stood upon the table — she opened it.

"How ugly! I never saw anything so ugly! — and to take the place of that lovely little bijou he let fall, It is provoking!"

There was a note in the box: she opened and read.

"DEAR EVY,

"I hope you will like your cup. It was the most expensive I could find to replace the little delicacy I so unfortunately handled. I send a couple of Chinese Magots, as they call them, into the bargain, which I found at the India House the other day. They are as ugly as sin — but worth half their weight in gold."

She put down the letter.

"How tiresome! I hate those cups! I have got one or two, and have put them into Esther's room. Where shall I put these hideous monsters? I vow I have not an inch of room left — and such odious, horrid things! And then it's so tiresome papa making me a present of them, because one must put them in a prominent place, or he will be vexed; and that is so disagreeable!"

"Oh, dear me! — what plagues there are in life!"

“And now that tiresome girl! She *will* put verbenas into the flower-glass, and she knows I have hated the smell like poison, ever since they used to bring verbenas and roses to my bed-side, in that long illness of mine!”

She went to the china vase filled with flowers, whose beauty would have charmed the demon of spleen herself out of her ill humour; but Evelyn was not to be so charmed.

She was sick of she knew not what, surfeited with too much; but she would have thought it, indeed, a dreadful misery if any one had attempted a cure by taking an atom of the too much away.

Luxury was become a habit. It had ceased to be an enjoyment. But the worst was, it insidiously generated a more dangerous habit of inveterate selfishness — the more dangerous, because totally unsuspected.

These things had become necessities; and we none of us think ourselves very selfish for demanding necessities.

She had opened the window, but she did not again look through it at the holy and heavenly night, whose influence might have purified and raised her soul, as it was wont to do.

Her mind was full of these china tea-cups, magots and verbenas; and she stood by the table, first taking up one and then the other, quite occupied by her vexation.

Whilst the moon was silvering the woods, and the

low sound of the winds was breathing through the trees, and the stars were gleaming with their thousand eyes, and singing their song of praise —

She had no eyes, no ears now, for that beauty which the Mighty Giver has spread before all his children. She could only think of her cups.

The pretty one her father had broken, and the ugly thing he had chosen to replace it, and those two hideous magots, which she *must* put among her things, because given them to her.

She never thought of being grateful to him for his good-nature. Gratitude is almost the last thing children brought up in this absurd manner think of.

To have everything they want, is a matter of course. They never think of thanking their parents for it. It is a sort of right, a sort of right of prescription which it would be an injury to dispute, and no kindness in them to acknowledge.

But this fine girl was not altogether spoiled yet. There was a little corner of flesh still left in a heart fast turning to stone.

She rung her silver bell, and Esther appeared.

"How tiresome you are!" she began, more acrimoniously than beautiful creatures are generally supposed to speak in novels. "How tiresome you are! Here I come up and find the window shut, though I told you I would have it left open. All these nasty creatures making it so disagreeable! and then that odious verben-

— why *will* you put it in the flower-pots? — But what's the matter, Esther? — Have you been crying?"

The poor girl's tears at this gushed over her cheeks. She began to sob so, that she could hardly speak. At last she got out —

"My mother —"

"Why, what of your mother? — She's not worse, I hope?"

"Oh, Miss Evelyn!"

"Not worse, I hope?"

"She's — she's — dead."

"I hope not — I hope not — I hope not — poor dear!" taking her hand, and the whole countenance changing at once to the kindest expression of sympathy; "I hope not — your mother! Poor dear Esther! — Your mother?"

"Oh, Miss Marston! and such a mother! — Such a mother to me — to all of us — and the little one, and the babby!" and there was a fresh burst of grief.

"Poor girl! poor girl! — I know what it is! It's a long time since I had a mother. But I know what it is! I know what it is!" And her eyes were ready to overflow too.

Esther looked up at her lovingly.

Such things it was, in spite of all Evelyn's faults, that still kept up the affection of her dependants. She was proud, unreasonable, tyrannical, and hasty; but she had a heart, after all. There never was sorrow

or suffering, but it met with the ready tear and the open hand.

"She is a dear creature!" thought Esther, and felt comforted; and encouraged by sympathy, she went on seeking relief, as people like her love to seek it, in talking of her loss.

And Evelyn led her on by those kind questions which incline the full heart to unburthen itself, and she listened whilst Esther, in the overflowing of her sorrow, described what her mother had been.

How she had laboured, and wearied, and suffered for them.

"Father, you know, Miss Marston, was not quite but we never talk of father — mother never would let us. When he was laid in his coffin! — I shall never forget it — 'Children,' she said, 'he is gone. Poor man! he is silent — there he lies — he can never again say a word in his own defence, and it would be a wicked, wicked thing to utter one against him. He was as fine and as steady a young man as ever lived when I married him, and I shall think of him so.' And with that she cried a good deal. And none of us ever spoke against father again. She was very thin when he died, and left her with babby, and little Tom, and ten more, of which I was the oldest."

It was the usual tale of domestic heroism in humble life — of the mother's celestial devotion — I call it celestial, for from heaven it comes. She had been

everything for her children; and, in spite of a drunken husband, had, by her unwearied exertions and self-denial, managed to bring them decently up, and get them out in the world.

The old story had the old conclusion. She had died a worn-out shadow, an old woman, in what ought to have been the flower of her age.

It was a lesson not lost.

The heart of Evelyn was still capable of being struck by it.

"What a contrast!" thought she, as her eye glanced round the room.

"Why did you never tell me about this before?" she said, struck with that remorse which *will* make itself felt by the most habitual self-indulgence, when the superfluous luxuries of their own lives are brought into sharp contrast with the destitution of others.

"Why did you never tell me about this before?"

"My mother would not have been pleased," said Esther; "I came here to do my duty, not to crave an alms."

"Right." Evelyn was struck and humbled. She felt diminished in her own eyes, not even to have been allowed to do anything! One thing she would do now, however. "You will like to go home for a few days and see about things, won't you?"

Esther looked eagerly up.

"Oh, dear! I should be so glad! But you don't like any one to dress you but me, Miss Evelyn."

With a mixture of pride and anxiety.

"I like you best — I like nobody else; but you *shall* go."

It was really a little sacrifice on her part. She hated any one about her but her own maid.

She felt comfortable to be able to make the sacrifice. And she went on. "You shall go early to-morrow; and to-night I will put myself to bed, for I am sure, if I were in your place, I should like to go to bed and be alone."

And, as Esther hesitated —

"Let me be. I shall like for once to learn how to wait upon myself. Nobody knows — sometime in *my* life I may need it."

"As if the sky would fall," thought Esther. And Evelyn certainly believed such an event to be about as possible. For, besides being sole heiress to her father's great wealth, she knew she had forty thousand pounds, her mother's fortune, settled upon her.

Her father had never exactly told her this, to be sure. Fathers of his sort often dislike the idea of their children being independent of them; but there had been plenty of other people to do so, and she knew it to be a fact, which, however, she had not much troubled herself about.

At times, when the bankruptcy of some great and

wealthy house was announced in the newspapers, she would feel glad that there was enough to prevent them begging their bread, if any disaster befel her father. That was her way of looking at forty thousand pounds.

She dismissed poor Esther with many kind words, and a promise to pay for the family mourning, and to help in the expenses of the funeral, so that all might be done decently, and as the children of such a good mother would wish. And she bade Esther see about what would be wanting for little Tom and the baby, and would do what she could to help, and she must look upon her as her friend. Such a good mother ought always to find her children befriended.

And so she sent the poor girl crying and sobbing away, but with her heart swelling with something besides grief — with love and gratitude to her mistress, who, she thought, was a perfect angel upon earth. And indeed Evelyn, when she did happen to stumble upon something right and kind to be done, had a way of her own in doing it, which atoned for many a fault. The precious germ, in danger of being smothered, was yet alive.

* * * *

The next morning Evelyn came down to breakfast quite a different creature from the shy, haughty, young lady of the night before.

She was so warm and happy within.

Pleased with herself, and every living thing beside, and quite overflowing with good humour and kindness.

And the influence of these nice things seemed to spread over them all.

Even Mrs. Allardice looked a little less stiff — Mademoiselle Fierville a little less coquette — as for Du Chastel, he was charmed.

Still she did not speak much, for she really was rather shy; but she looked so delightfully pleasant and happy!

He stole a glance at her now and then, and thought, one face excepted, he had never seen anything so bewitching.

And there was a sort of resemblance between the two faces. Something in this, which reminded him of that.

He was almost in danger of becoming inconstant to the image, which he had, with a chivalric fidelity, carried hidden in his heart so long — yet that could never be. And, in the faith of this conviction, he ventured to look oftener across the table, and to surrender himself more entirely to the charm of this sweet presence. He thought he carried his antidote within.

The breakfast room was a pretty little nook of a chamber, with a couple of large windows to the ground, which both stood wide open. It looked to the water, and after breakfast was over, Evelyn must go and feed her peacocks and swans.

So she took her bowl and went out through the window, and Mrs. Allardice, much distressed, begged Mademoiselle to fetch the young lady's large hat and take it after her.

"She *will* go out into the sun — and Mr. Marston is so anxious about freckles."

The beautiful, snowy swans came sailing, in all their white ruffling plumage, to the side of the bank; and she, standing upon the golden green of the mossy turf, fed them; and next came her peacocks, with their gorgeous necks and breasts of purpling blue and green, and their sweeping, many-eyed trains crowding round her — feeding out of that lily ungloved hand —

The sun sparkled on the water, and that beautiful creature, in her large hat! — and he, the young poet and painter, the worshipper of form and colour — but still more deeply, the worshipper of a higher beauty — looking on!

Dangerous work, Armand Du Chastel, in spite of the talisman you carry in your breast.

He could do no less than offer to carry the bowl for her as they returned to the house.

She gave it him with so sweet a smile!

They exchanged a few conventional sentences upon the beauty of the morning. I think this was the first time she had actually addressed him.

She left the breakfast-room immediately afterwards with Mrs. Allardice. And he betook himself to the

saloon, in company with Mademoiselle Fierville. This latter lady had engaged to introduce him to the scene of his future operations, in place of the housekeeper, to whom the office naturally belonged.

He was not sorry for this. There was something about the young French woman that he rather liked.

He had an instinct in favour of anything from the country of his ancestors, though he could not help thinking the brilliant and somewhat flippant French girl astonishingly different from anything he had been accustomed to see.

How unlike his mother or Anne Douglas; — but pleasant, nevertheless.

* * * *

So time slipped away.

It was very seldom that Armand saw anything of Evelyn but at table, and when there, as I have said, she was extremely reserved; unusually quiet; for when the three ladies were by themselves, Miss Marston would be the gayest of the gay.

She had a lively fancy, and was in general indifferent enough whether she pleased or not. She was something in the position of a royal person; all was to be considered right which she chose to do or say.

But now, very much to Mrs. Allardice's satisfaction, and equally to Mademoiselle Fierville's satisfaction and surprise, Miss Marston was extremely silent.

The conversation, however, did not flag on that account, but was carried on with considerable spirit by the other three. Even Mrs. Allardice herself, seemed to feel the influence of the young painter's engaging manners. She was pleased with the respectful politeness with which he treated her — listening to her somewhat lengthy, and very dry harangues with an air of deference. This was done, partly because it was his habitual manner to women of a certain age, and partly, perhaps, in a little spirit of contradiction; for he thought that neither of the younger ladies treated the elder one quite as they ought.

Mrs. Allardice was a woman of rather cultivated mind, and did not want a certain portion of sense. Indeed, she had the reputation of being a remarkably clever and highly instructed person; a matter which these two impertinent young ladies were very much inclined to doubt; but, at all events, she possessed enough of such things, to be able, when she pleased, to keep up a conversation above the common; and she pleased to do so now.

She was a woman after all — A wooden one — but still a woman; and to appear to advantage in the eyes of this very gifted and superior young man, as she held him to be, was not altogether a matter of indifference to her.

What woman, when or ever, was indifferent to the power of pleasing?

Briefly, the consequence ensued, that at every meeting, a good deal of pleasant conversation took place, which was not without its enjoyment for our young friend. Conversation with an agreeable woman, be her age or features what they may, has a charm for most men, and had more especially so for Armand, who seldom enjoyed pleasure of this kind.

Evelyn rarely spoke — but she listened.

Mrs. Allardice was too much occupied by the pleasure of talking herself, and giving out her ideas where they appeared so acceptable, to have her eyes about her.

Miss Marston preserved her dignity, which was the principal concern; and though every now and then the ice would melt, and the young lady, as if carried away by the interest of some theme or other which might be in course of discussion, would break out with an astonishing vivacity and brilliancy, yet the flash was soon over, and she relapsed into her passive character of listener again.

Often she did not even seem to listen. She would sit playing with the flowers upon the dessert-table, or nursing her dog — pulling his long, curly hair, and whispering little compliments into his ears, as if all that was going on was a matter of perfect indifference if not more, with her.

Mademoiselle Fierville always tried to take a part in these conversations — but it was difficult for her to harmonise with Mrs. Allardice, so she did not appear to

particular advantage, and she felt that she did not; but sometimes, though rarely, Mrs. Allardice would be called away, and then the talk between the lively and sentimental French woman, and the clever young man, would be very animated.

The young lady would appear to be more than ever absorbed by her dog, but lost not a syllable of it.

* * * * *

So passed day after day; till days amounted to weeks, and insensibly the acquaintance thus began, ripened into more cordiality and intimacy.

Du Chastel's manners were so perfectly unexceptionable, so polished, so easy, yet so entirely free from the slightest shade of undue familiarity, that it happened, as it inevitably will happen, when people of real good breeding and real superiority of mind are brought into intimate communication with others — the barriers of rank and position insensibly melt away, and the individual finds himself restored to the place which nature, and not society, had assigned to him.

It was a warm and most delightful summer — the evenings were perfectly delicious.

The windows of the small dining-room stood always wide open, and the little party would stroll out upon the grass, and conversation be thus continued, until gradually the strolls lengthened into evening walks by the water and through the endless paths cut in the beautiful woods — when the missel-thrush would be

singing out his very soul at the top of one of the highest oaks, and the fern-owl be spinning his burring wheel, and white moths be flitting by! Sometimes they talked and sometimes were silent, and sometimes Evelyn brought her dog with her, and seemed to think nothing else in the world worth attending to; and sometimes she loitered behind, hanging upon Mademoiselle Fierville's arm; and sometimes she walked as stiff as a poker by the side of Mrs. Allardice; and sometimes she lingered alone, and her white muslin dress might, may be, catch upon a briar, and Armand have to disentangle it, and then a few words would be exchanged. Sometimes, on her part, something sharp and pungent as any thorn or nettle in the woods would escape her — at others a certain inflexion of voice was rather dangerously bewitching — if bewitching, however, I must positively assert this was entirely, on her part, without design.

She had not a grain of coquetry in her whole composition — She was much too haughty, and far too little occupied with self, for that — Both her faults and her qualities forbade it.

On their return from these walks, they would now and then dawdle upon the flight of steps where we first saw Miss Marston and her French governess. This dawdling would not seldom end in sitting down there together, to enjoy the beauty of the evening.

The talk at such times would be more than usually pleasant, but Evelyn more silent than ever.

CHAPTER XVII.

"His brow was sad, his eye beneath
Flashed like a falchion from its sheath,
And like a silver clarion rung
The accents of that unknown tongue —
Excelsior."

LONGFELLOW.

ONE evening — it was just at the end of July, and after a splendid day — the party, consisting of the three ladies and their guest, had taken a longer walk than usual.

There was, among the woods, what is a great but rather rare beauty in the more northern counties, an avenue — or rather an arched nave of beech-trees.

The trees had been planted pretty closely, and backed on either side by the wood, had been drawn up to a great height, in proportion to their bulk; and thus their branches thrown forward into the open space between the rows, had produced one of the most beautiful effects in the vegetable kingdom: —

"The arched roof sprung high aloof,
On pillars lofty, and light, and small."

It was literally so. The trunks of the trees, slender, and straight as the shaft of an arrow, sprang upwards to the sky; and at a considerable height from the ground, the branches crossing each other formed a long arcade, so exactly resembling the nave of a gothic cathedral,

that it was impossible to behold it, and not to believe, in spite of all other plausible theories, that it was arches such as these, of Nature's own producing, which suggested to the unknown inventors their wondrously beautiful designs.

It was a long, long arcade; and the extreme beauty of this leafy temple was at this moment enhanced by the deep shadows thrown by a sinking sun, gilding the lower branches; whilst above, all was in mysterious twilight. The stillness being only broken by the wild bursts from some missel-thrush, or blackbird, like a late flower, still keeping up its spring song, — or the noiseless sweep by of the large white owl, coming forth for its evening chase.

They were all silent.

The rapturous and somewhat affected exclamations, in which Mademoiselle Fierville thought it very attractive to indulge before the beauties of nature, were subdued; it was so evident that nobody was in a humour to listen to them. Mrs. Allardice, rather annoyed at having been persuaded to venture out so far, leaned upon the young artist's arm, which she had been prevailed upon to accept; but being a little tired with her walk, seemed not much in the humour for conversation — fortunately for him, for he was not the least in a humour to converse.

He walked on, musing and silent; following Mademoiselle, who, as usual in all things, put herself fore-

most, and followed by Evelyn, who, as usual, kept on the reserve, and in the back-ground.

She walked at some distance behind the three advancing figures, silent and pensive.

There was something in the solemn and subdued beauty of the scene around her, which sank into her soul. She wished to be alone, to give herself up to it; and lingered till even when they spoke, she could not hear the sound of their voices.

She was in a mood new to her.

Thoughtful and still, with a host of images and feelings till then unknown, swelling up in her heart.

But one thing she had learned from her two uncongenial companions, — to keep feelings of this nature sacredly to herself. All that was frivolous, perverted, or mistaken, found ready sympathy and encouragement with them. Her pride, ambition, love of magnificence and exclusiveness, in Mrs. Allardice; her romance, her passion for dress, luxuriously-appointed rooms, and vain imaginations, in the frivolous and worthless French governess — but there was no sympathy for those better, and purer, and holier gleams, which now and then, and especially in such scenes and at such hours as these, would break across the darkness within — and they were confided to no one.

Nor had there ever been any Other to turn to — for Evelyn lived without God in the world. Not but that she was a regularly-instructed Christian, or rather

Church of England woman. Mrs. Allardice, who was most strict and exact in everything that related to the externals of religion, had not failed in what she considered among the first duties of an accomplished governess. She had carefully exacted from the young lady all those attendances at the public services of the church, which respect for the institution demanded; but farther than this she could not lead, for she had never advanced farther herself. She was a regular formalist, and as such perfectly satisfied — as formalists mostly are — with her own proceedings; looking down with considerable disdain upon every person, let them belong to what denomination they might who were less exact in such things than she was; no matter what their life, or their Christian love to God or man.

Of love in any of its forms, Mrs. Allardice knew nothing; and as to a conception of the beauty and goodness which lie in a youthful passion, true and pure — her only idea was to keep up a most unsparing warfare against it.

Of course, Evelyn could find no sympathy in one of those very exemplary persons —

“Content to dwell in decencies for ever,”
who are so abhorrent to the young and ardent-minded.

In short, whenever her heart spoke, she was accustomed to listen in silence, and carefully conceal all its sayings from those around her.

Partly from the delicate pride of real feeling — partly from the proud disdain of superior feeling — chiefly from a hidden but most strong distrust and contempt, which she nourished to both her governesses.

Motherless girl she was.

What is not implied in those few words?

And so, she walks musingly under these arching beeches; and thinks of things of which she scarcely entrusts herself with the consciousness that she is thinking.

Sometimes she lifts her eyes up to the fading sky, visible through the branches; sometimes she listens to the distant hoot of the white owl; sometimes to the thrilling melody of the thrushes, answering and calling to each other —

“Where is Miss Marston?” asked Mrs. Allardice, suddenly stopping, and looking round. “I thought she was close behind us.”

The white figure was to be seen at a considerable distance, not advancing, but standing still.

Mrs. Allardice was vexed.

“What can she be about? and the fog is rising. It is getting quite damp under these trees. We ought to go home — What can Miss Marston be doing? We shall have her taking cold. Mademoiselle — where is Mademoiselle? — As far off the other way — really it is too provoking. We must go and meet her, I suppose;

but I am excessively tired. — Young people are so unreflecting.”

“Would you sit down upon this fallen tree, and suffer me to go and tell Miss Marston that you are waiting for her?”

“Well, I don’t know — really I am very much tired. Yes, if you please — for she does not seem to be stirring — and it is a considerable walk to the abbey, though we shall return by a somewhat shorter path than that by which we came.”

He was not sorry — not sorry! oh, what a relief it was to drop that arm which seemed to weigh him down like Dante’s leaden mantle; but the submitting to which infliction appeared to be the tacit condition upon which he was allowed to make one in these walks. What a relief it was to feel for a moment free!

After having placed Mrs. Allardice upon the log, he went forward a pace or two to get out of her wake like one escaping from the vortex of a sinking ship, and then paused to enjoy, undisturbed, these few precious moments of liberty.

How beautiful! how solemn! how impressive was the scene!

The noble arch overhead, magnified by the obscurity which was closing in; the wind walking over the tree-tops with a soft, stilly sound; a distant sheep-bell; the yelp of a distant dog, the mingled sounds of a distant

village, the hooting owl, the magnificent planet gleaming bright through the branches!

Mrs. Allardice thought he was bewitched, and could hardly endure the irritable impatience with which she watched him slowly going down the avenue. What could he be thinking of! when it was getting so damp. She should be laid up with the rheumatism. One comfort was, that it would be a reason for putting an end to these evening walks, from which she could not well excuse herself, but of which she was heartily sick.

She watched the two figures angrily, now approaching each other with a slow, loitering step.

"Mrs. Allardice," he said, when at last they met, "has commissioned me to inform Miss Marston, that, as the evening is drawing on, she thinks it dangerous to remain longer in the damp under these trees."

"Damp! It is not the least damp — What nonsense!"

And she glanced up at him. It was a sudden flash. It blinded him a little.

"Mrs. Allardice is impatient to return home, I believe," he said. His manner was one of the most studied formality.

"She is so tiresome! But no matter! Please to go back and tell her I will come."

He looked at her wistfully for a moment.

What! Not for one brief instant might he stay?

Well — it was better so.

He turned away; but she walked fast, and they came nearly together to Mrs. Allardice. The good lady was by this time very much out of sorts, but she never ventured to show her ill-humour to Miss Marston, for she knew the high-spirited girl would not bear it, and she was approaching to a period when the first rupture might sever the tie which bound her to the family. Every year of Evelyn's age she knew was rendering her own presence less necessary; indeed, it was as companions rather than as governesses, that the two ladies were still retained at the abbey.

The evening was so lovely, that when they arrived at the steps they all by one accord stood still, and Evelyn proposed that tea should be brought to them there. This proposal was warmly seconded by Mademoiselle Fierville, and somewhat unwillingly consented to by Mrs. Allardice. So they sat down; Mademoiselle by the side of Armand, upon one of the lower steps; Mrs. Allardice upon the one above, leaning against a column, and Evelyn behind her, upon the step above that.

An arrangement which seemed to please every one so well, and the tea was so refreshing, and the evening so charming, that insensibly they fell into a more than usually easy and pleasant conversation. The night was soft and warm, the light wind of the evening had lulled, not a breath was stirring. Silence was over the woods, the waters were gleaming in the moonbeams, and a bright planet now approaching its zenith, was calmly

looking down upon them, surrounded by a host of glittering stars.

It was one of those evenings not easily to be forgotten.

So they sat and enjoyed their tea; and when that was over, continued to talk in that agreeable, almost confidential way, which such a scene inclines to.

At last Mademoiselle Fierville opened upon a new subject of discourse with —

“I have a favour to ask of you, Mr. Du Chastel. I have an idea that there is something out of the common — *prodigieusement romanesque* and interesting in your history; and this is just a night to tell it upon. Is it not, Mrs. Allardice? Don't you think so, Miss Marston? Confess it, both of you. Even *you* cannot resist the influences of such an evening. Come, Mr. Du Chastel, be good-natured, and tell us your story. I am sure it must be a delightful one.”

“Not very delightful, and not very romantic. It is a tale of poverty and undeserved misfortune — if a human being may be allowed to say so — but when I say this, I am not speaking of myself, but of another. The interest of such a story is not very great. — Misfortune upon misfortune is the fate of many. Poverty the lot of the majority.”

“Oh! that sounds quite a delightful programme. Undeserved misfortunes. What can be more interesting? I was sure I was right. One could not know you with-

out feeling certain that yours had been no common lot."

Armand bowed slightly — then said,

"But Mademoiselle mistakes me. I said mine *was* a very common lot."

"Oh! but I am positive your misfortunes have not been like other people's misfortunes. Poverty! *Ciel!* with genius such as yours! ... So pray let us hear your story. Besides," she said, dropping her voice, "you don't know Allardice as well as I do; and she would be much more comfortable I can tell you, if she knew you were — what I am sure you are — a gentleman born. You cannot think how much more easy she would find it to attend to Mr. Marston's letter; which she only half believes, as she was saying to Miss Marston but yesterday ... I beg your pardon ... but you understand.... Mrs. Allardice," speaking aloud, "should you not like very much to hear Mr. Du Chastel's story?"

"Certainly," she rather coldly answered, "if Mr. Du Chastel will please to take that trouble."

But a young head was thrust suddenly forward and as suddenly withdrawn, with an expression, which had the good lady seen, I question whether she would have allowed the narrative to proceed.

She was, however, looking another way at that moment, and the gossiping sort of curiosity common to natures such as hers being excited by the proposal, she began to press the request with more warmth than she

had done at first, till Armand felt it would be ungracious not to comply.

"There can be scarcely anything to be imagined more common-place and prosaic," he began, "than my own history, which Mademoiselle de Fierville's obliging imagination has represented as something invested with much interest. It is the every-day story of a man struggling to get his bread by the cultivation and exercise of a talent, of the value of which he is the last person to be a judge. A tale such as every life presents where there is a struggle to be maintained against fortune — one of painful defeats, and slight successes; of short-lived hopes, and long, but too well justified, fears; of unrewarded labour, and unexpected kindness; of almost habitual despondency, with intervals of intense enjoyment — Such as most lives are, I imagine, if we knew them in detail — Mine has nothing to render it an exception."

"Ah! those generalisations," said Mademoiselle, in a disappointed tone, "how I hate them! — That is literally telling us nothing. Speak, Mrs. Allardice — Do speak, Miss Marston. Now Mr. Du Chastel has begun, pray let us get something more out of him. Do speak, Miss Marston. I am sure there is more to tell than this. — Your very name promises adventures, either your own or of those who went before you."

"Perhaps so," he said, and smiled a little. "If Mademoiselle Fierville will be contented with the history

of those who went before me, it is other and far worthier than mine."

"Should you not like to hear it? I should so like to hear it. I do so love family history. Pray tell us of your family."

Mrs. Allardice said a few words.

He turned that way to answer her. He caught a view of Evelyn's face as she sat there behind her. She did not speak, but the countenance was full of earnest attention.

Thus encouraged, he began: —

"My family, as you would anticipate from my name, is not of Saxon descent. We are from France, but belong to those whom their country drove, without pity, from her bosom. Not because they were a dishonour to the soil from which they sprang, but because their hearts were brave and faithful to God, and to each other; and because they refused to disobey their consciences under the tyranny of a power, which they had been taught to look upon — and still look upon — as an enemy to the truth of the Gospel.

"The attempt to force the sanctuary which God has reserved to himself in the bosom of every one, and oblige men to renounce what they believe to be truth, was resisted in spite of torments, imprisonments, and to the death. Those whom it was found impossible to convert, and impossible by violence to subdue, were at last compelled, in order to escape from a barbarity unparal-

leled, to forsake their houses and country — they became outcasts upon the world.”

The head was now again advanced, and the eyes fixed upon the speaker.

He paused as if for breath, for his bosom was heaving.

“Go on,” said a voice from behind him.

“My great-grandfather was among those driven into exile by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

“The French are a brave nation, and jealous of their honour. Strange fanaticism of the religion I have been taught to hold in distrust and abhorrence; which could lead such a nation to tolerate — nay, to applaud — a breach like this of everything an honourable man holds sacred. But thus it was. — Forgive me! I was to relate my family history, but my blood boils when I think upon a deed, which drove thousands upon thousands of innocent and pious creatures from their hearths, and from their homes, for conscience sake. — Miserable, ruined, helpless wretches — as it appeared to their barbarous persecutors — forsaken of God and man. But it was not so. — They knew it would not be so. God was with them, that God to whom they cried out of the depths, and he heard them. The God who never leaves us nor forsakes us — as they experienced — as we have experienced — as all experience —”

He stopped, somewhat ashamed of his vehemence;

but every word he had uttered was sinking deep into one heart there.

"Go on!" — in the smothered voice of one who could hardly articulate, the heart was so full.

"My ancestor possessed extensive estates in Languedoc. His castle was magnificent, his vineyards, his corn-fields, his olive-yards rich and abounding; for my people were industrious as they were God-fearing. The blessing of the Almighty seemed to follow them, and everything prospered in their hand. My ancestor rarely visited the court of the great king at that time reigning in Paris. He led a life at once godly and simple; he lived among his own people, in the exercise of a religion, which he esteemed as by far and far the most precious bequest which had descended to him from his forefathers.

"He spent his time in the practice of piety, and those good works, which his religious principles taught him to look upon as demanded from every follower of the great Lord and Master who died for him and all of us. — But what of that?

"Their very virtues! — Their regularity, their strictness, their prayers, and, above all, their industry and increasing wealth — the result of that sobriety and virtuous endeavour — was exactly what aroused the jealousy and envy of their adversaries, and only made the French Protestants the more detested.

"Jealousy is a bitter, cruel thing even in a domestic

household — what awfulness of power there is in its wickedness when it poisons a state!

“They were persecuted with the most unrelenting barbarity — men of whom the world was not worthy.

“They were tried, but not in despair.

“Through faith they subdued, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight armies. Women received their dead to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: others had cruel mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned; they were sawn asunder; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, of whom the world was not worthy...”

A pause for breath; then — he took up the subject more quietly.

“It was a long struggle, but it ended at last... They were driven forth, and all was over.”

“Go on!”

“My ancestor’s chateau was levelled with the ground. His vineyards, his olive gardens were burned; his cornfields and pastures made desert. All was one black, useless ruin, where all had been fruitfulness and peace! He went to England. He was brave not only in virtue but in arms. He fought in the armies of the great William, for that cause of liberty of conscience which was

his own. — When peace came, he devoted himself to commerce, and, under the blessing of God, he succeeded in building a second fortune, founded on industry and virtue.

“He was a good and great man....”

“A faithful servant of God ... *That* includes all. What can one say more?”

There was a dead silence.

Mademoiselle Fierville shrugged her shoulders, and began to wish she had never asked for the story. It was stupid and gloomy, and, moreover, rather shocking. Contrary to the whole spirit of the religion of the true church; a history of heretics, not quite proper to be listened to.

She was a professed Roman Catholic, though she usually troubled herself little upon the subject any way — but this was something more than common. She had not thought much about it, but she believed the Hugonots were a very horrid set of people; and they were obliged once to have them all killed, and yet they could not get rid of them, till at last they drove them all out of the country. They were a very abominable set of heretics, and neither believed in the Pope, nor the Virgin Mary, and refused to honour any of the saints. She wished she had never troubled herself about Du Chastel or his ancestors and yet how charmingly he looked when all on fire with the subject! What a pity his forefathers should have belonged to these horrid wretches!

Mrs. Allardice sat and looked very righteous, and very much scandalised, but a little pleased, at the wickedness of the Roman Catholics, whom she was accustomed to look upon as a set of people whose laymen were all profligacy and superstition, and every priest belonging to them as cruel and wicked as the Grand Inquisitor himself.

As for Evelyn, she was trembling from head to foot. She felt like one suddenly awakened, from a profound sleep, as by the trump of the archangel. Her eyes dazzled with the unsupportable brightness of an unparalleled light. A new world — infinite, boundless — in glory unspeakable, burst upon her.

That was at this moment taking place within her, which happens to some — more especially to those who have long lain in the darkness and shadow of death — once and for ever.

It was the agonies of that new birth into being, which opens up the very springs of real life.

She could not speak — she did not attempt it. She could scarcely move, she was shaking so violently; but as she remained perfectly silent, no one perceived her agitation.

As for Armand, his thoughts were far away — his mind wandering amid those recollections still strong and dear to the heart of every one of his nation and religion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"So fell the mists from her mind, and she saw the world far below her,
Dark no longer, but all illumined with love, and the pathway,
..... lying smooth and fair in the distance."

EVANGELINE.

THE two governesses were not either of them inclined, however, to let the conversation drop so.

They had both their own reasons, springing from their own hidden weaknesses, to wish to hear more.

You must not imagine Mrs. Allardice as an ancient woman, who had long outlived the influences of the softer passions. She still possessed a considerable portion of the beauty for which she had been distinguished in her youth, and still laid claim to that admiration, which for so many years of her life she had been accustomed to consider as, by a certain right, her own. Of love she had never known anything. Cold in temper, selfish, proud, and ambitious — her beauty had been treasured, as the means of distinction and admiration, the ruling objects of her life.

She was a formalist in every sense of the word. A mere lay figure, upon which to hang the proprieties — and she had taken it into her head, that this excessive strictness of deportment was adorned to the highest degree, by the extraordinary beauty of so exemplary a prude.

The manner which Armand had adopted towards her — partly, because she represented in one sense the mistress of the house — mostly, I believe, from that unfeigned pity which he felt for governesses in general — for all — who with habits of refinement, were condemned to so irksome a way of getting their living — his deference, his attentions, had quite won her heart; and the more so, as she, with her usual self-conceit and absurdity, attributed these to quite a wrong cause, namely — to the power of her own unrivalled attractions.

She must be forgiven that she quite forgot that the young and beautiful Evelyn was present; because, in fact, Armand had repaid what he thought haughtiness and reserve, by a manner, at the very least, as cold and distant; and likewise, because she considered them as moving in spheres so distant, that there was not the slightest chance of these two fair planets ever approaching each other.

So Mrs. Allardice had nourished some most ridiculous ideas in secret — profound secret — for there was nothing on earth she dreaded like the sarcasms of the *spirituelle*, and not particularly amiable, French governess. She well knew Mademoiselle Fierville would not spare her, if she could detect the slightest trace of a weakness, in which she almost openly indulged herself, as proper to her own age and condition.

Mrs. Allardice was not much wrong there; for nothing upon earth would at once have excited the young French

lady's jealousy and malice, or rejoiced her heart so much — as to have detected the slightest symptom of infirmity in her exemplary colleague.

But enough of two, in their way, almost equally selfish and foolish women — all that imports to my story is, to observe that these guardians were both far too much occupied with their own schemes, and with slyly watching each other's proceedings, to have any attention to bestow upon the young creature committed to their care.

They both agreed in one thing — that is, in considering her entirely out of the question; and, in consequence, felt not the slightest necessity, either as regarded her interests or their own, to observe her at all.

And so she sat shivering, shaking, overpowered by a new world of ideas and emotions — an enigma to herself — or rather not thinking of herself — but her whole soul in a confused tumult of thoughts and feelings too big for it. Whilst the other two were busy, one watching herself, lest she should betray her secret; the other watching the young man to try and discover his, of which she felt not the slightest doubt she was the secret object. The admiration, and self-interested feelings of both ladies, considerably increased by the discovery that Mr. Armand Du Chastel, who came to paint the panels of the saloon, was neither more nor less than a gentleman born — once a man of birth and station — and, in all probability, for a gloss of this nature is readily

and usually added on such occasions — heir to a fine landed property still — though at present, obliged to labour as a poor artist.

They both wished to hear some more about it all — and how he came to be what and where he was.

He showed some little reluctance to take up the tale, but they overcame it by their importunity, and managed one way or other to draw from him pretty nearly the history which I have related.

When he approached the subject of his father, his heart warmed again; and he described, with the enthusiasm which upon that topic he ever felt, all that his father had done and suffered in France, and his good and noble course of life in England.

He told of his devotion to the great object of relieving the cruel alternations in trade which so often distressed the people around him — his life of frugality, simplicity, and self-denial though possessing competent wealth, that he might have the more to spare for those that wanted; and lastly, of the perilous and final effort he had made, in the hope of establishing the trade of his countrymen and people upon a more substantial basis. How he had laboured unassisted — had risked his whole fortune — how he had failed at last in his generous attempt, and had been completely ruined.

All this, when once the subject had warmed his heart and unbound his tongue, Armand poured forth

with a tone and pathos it would be vain for me to attempt to imitate.

He stopped at last — and again literally for want of breath.

There was once more a grievous disappointment.

Then he was the son of a poor man after all — of a broken bankrupt, who lived in an obscure corner of London, and was now only a clerk in a commercial house!

The great ancestor, with his castle, his vineyards, his olive grounds and corn-fields, was sadly obscured.

Mrs. Allardice began to think that it would not answer to play the part of Madame de Maintenon or Ninon de l'Enclos to this clever young painter. Mademoiselle Fierville, though mortified too, did not give the thing altogether up, as quite such a bad affair.

But it is certain from that day, the one took refuge in a sort of unapproachable distance, and the other ventured upon a species of familiarity which they would neither of them have adopted, had the Du Chastels never meddled either with religion or philanthropy, and taken care to look after the main chance, and preserve the family estate.

But how was it with Evelyn?

As the narrative proceeded, the vehement emotions excited by the first part of it gradually subsided, and it was with a calm, serious attention that she listened to the rest.

Her eyes were now again rivetted upon the speaker, with a deep earnestness, that seemed to absorb every other feeling.

If he had been a young saint preaching the gospel to her for the first time, she could not, with more intense reverence and attention, or more utter absence of self-consciousness, have devoured every word and look.

It was to her, indeed, a new and solemn lesson.

The misery described exceeded every remotest idea she had ever formed upon the subject of the poor man's misery. She was in these things almost as ignorant as the Princess of France, who wondered that, rather than starve, the peasants did not eat bread and cheese.

To be sure, she knew there were such things as ragged beggars, and she had heard of people actually starving! but these things had been far from her — she had never realised what it was actually to starve! what it was to want all the necessaries of life — roof and fire, and bed and food — what sickness and famine combined, a lean-cheeked want, and howling despair were!

He painted it all so vividly! — for a painter in words he was, as well as with his pencil. She saw it now; she understood what it must be now! — what real life was made of — What the parable of Dives and Lazarus meant; — what the Man of Sorrows, who had not where to lay his head, meant; — what the story of her who clothed the poor widows in coats and mantles,

and died in the upper chamber, and was revered by an Apostle — meant!

What the shout of the cherubim and the assembled and *divided* multitudes — and —

“I was hungry and ye gave me no meat,” — meant.

And she cast a hasty glance back upon her own life, her father's life, all their lives — her own life above all — for the generous think of little but their own short-comings — and she shuddered.

And then rose before her the resplendent picture, as he had drawn it in characters of love, of that great, good, simple, devoted man, and his self-denying life. First, his labours at the oar. She had never understood till now what it was really to be a galley slave — Hideous misery! — endured for God and conscience-sake! And then his return to common life again; — but, ah, how far from a common life was his! Affluence could not spoil, ease could not soften — there was nothing of luxury and prodigality like hers about him — self was nothing — luxury was nothing. The shows and the pride of life were trampled upon with disdain.

And what were all these things in which she had been indulging so long? Nothing — less than nothing!

Feed the hungry — clothe the naked — visit the sick — rescue the captive!...

Poor, miserable, helpless, starving wretches! Yes; lay down your purple and fine linen; and your jewels and your vain indulgences, and give the hungry bread!

Had *she* ever done this?

"Yes, to be sure; she had thrown down a five-pound or a ten-pound note, when there were subscriptions for she scarcely knew or cared what; giving because others did, that which she did not want, and never should miss.

And this man!...

Moral approbation is a blessed, warming, purifying thing. Hero worship — but far more saint worship — is most good for man. Not the formal saint-reverencing of a Roman calendar, but the heart's generous enthusiasm for the excellent above the earth; that by which we become transformed from our own image to their image.

Thought travels fast. It took no very long time for all this to pass through Evelyn's mind, as she sat there motionless as a statue. Her eyes were no longer rivetted on him, for he had ceased to speak, but were fixed upon that fair planet-star, with its white, beautiful, holy light, gleaming over the dark, dark woods.

There was a general silence, which was at last interrupted by Armand rising and walking away. He went towards the woods, and his figure was soon lost in the shadow.

After he was gone, a few insignificant sentences passed between the two governesses; and then Mrs. Alardice, starting up, seemed to remember, for the first time, that Evelyn was sitting behind her.

"Dear Miss Marston, I have behaved very ill," she began, rather flurried; "I quite forgot how late it was; and you have only that thin India shawl on. If you should catch cold..."

"I shall not catch cold," said Evelyn. "Mrs. Alardice, you are always thinking I shall, and I never do. Why must I be more afraid of catching cold than other people?"

"Why? my dear Miss Marston! How can you ask such questions? Why? Because a young lady of your fortune and pretensions, and so delicately brought up, is not, of course, accustomed to be exposed to the vicissitudes of the seasons as other people are..."

"What a horrible picture it was! — what misery!"

"Oh, my dear, I did very wrong to let you hear it!"

"It is enough to *attrister* one for a week," began Mademoiselle Fierville. "I am sure I little thought what was coming, when I asked for this dolorous story. At one time I *did* think we were going to hear more about the chateau in Languedoc, and all its gilding and tapestry, and gardens and fountains, and so on; but he passed it by, with half-a-dozen words. He, who can paint things so well, if he will! I declare I am quite horrified and stupified with all these dreadful stories. First in France, then in England — one no better than the other! What *can* be the use of filling one's head with these things?... It *can* do no good, you know."

"I don't know," said Evelyn, and turned short away,

and went into the house, leaving the two others upon the steps.

"I wish," said Mrs. Allardice, "you had not pressed for this story to-night. It has made her quite ill."

"*I* press for the story! I am sure my pressing was not what got it! — I know who asked for it, and in a manner the young gentleman could not very well refuse — Don't lay the dog on my back, if you please."

There was something not altogether displeasing to Mrs. Allardice in this superior influence attributed to her; and by Mademoiselle Fierville, who was accustomed to triumph openly and, as the other thought, most impertinently, in her fewer years.

"Well, I don't know which of us was the most to blame; but I devoutly wish it had been what I expected — quite a different sort of story. Mr. Marston wrote me, when he requested me to allow this gentleman a place at our table, that he was a man of family who had seen better days, and I expected an interesting description of ancient expense and magnificence, which had outrun its means, as great people often do, but which has always a greatness and splendour in it highly poetical. A tale of courts, and nobles, and taste, and luxury, and so on; not a mean, tiresome account of people quarrelling about their religion, which one can read in any history; and afterwards about the miseries of the Spital Fields weavers. What on earth have we to do with Spital Fields weavers, I wonder? They live quite in a

remote part of the town, and my impression is, have shown themselves often a very turbulent, dangerous set of people — besides, they are but a pack of French refugees after all!”

Thus Mrs. Allardice, vexed and disappointed, ran on in a way, to do her justice, rather unusually lengthy for her.

“It was an *étrange* history... And his father, the old Du Chastel, ruining himself for the sake of his people! I did not understand why, or *comment*; but, to tell the truth, I got tired, and began to think of something else. And now, I am so stiff with sitting so long, that I must positively run down the steps, and have a stretch before I come into supper.”

“No, Mademoiselle, that you positively must not do.”

“And why not, I pray? Who set Mrs. Allardice as duenna over me?”

“Propriety.”

“*Et droit d'ancienneté*,” with an ill-natured laugh.

“Well, I submit, I submit. — From wisdom, sanctified by long experience, there is no appeal.”

And so she went into the house.

And Mrs. Allardice followed, thinking what an odious, flippant creature that young Frenchwoman was; one she could neither humble nor mortify; and whether it would not be possible to get rid of her before her engagement was up. She was evidently intending to set her cap, to use Mrs. Allardice's elegant phrase, at

the young artist. Would it not be better to encourage the thing? But *that*, a certain tinge of jealousy in Mrs. A.'s heart forbade.

Better endure her than sacrifice so promising a young man to a creature who must make him wretched. Thus she put the matter to herself.

And so this evening came to an end.

They did not assemble at supper.

Armand went up to his own room when he came in without appearing again. Evelyn would not sit down to table, but took a crust of bread and a glass of water, and saying she was tired, went away.

Mademoiselle made a hasty meal, and then went into the sitting-room, to give the last touch to a trimming she was finishing. Mrs. Allardice sat comfortably enjoying her supper, and not the less so for being alone, and no malicious pair of black eyes there to be lifted up in marvel at the wonderful achievements of her appetite.

So she left little of a woodcock, and enjoyed a jelly and a cream, and some cakes, and two or three glasses of wine. These evening walks were restored to her good opinion as giving an appetite for the delicate things she was certain to find before her upon her return; a plentiful participation in which she esteemed an excellent thing for the preservation of beauty somewhat on the *retour*.

"Provided they are *really* good and really well cooked," she would add.

* * * *

It was a few days after this, to her, memorable evening, that Evelyn was seized with an unconquerable desire to go down into the saloon and herself examine the works of the painter.

A sentiment of maidenly modesty, arising from self-consciousness, had prevented her expressing a wish to do that which, to most people, would have appeared the simplest and most natural thing in the world. However, this evening, having watched Du Chastel out into the woods, and knowing that her two governesses were engaged, the one settling her account in the sitting-room, the other arranging something for her toilette; she resolved to venture down and see what he had been doing. "Read himself in his works," as she said. Dwell upon them, linger over them, with a pleasure which she did not attempt, did not, perhaps, dare to explain to herself.

It was by this time growing late.

She had been sitting for hours at her window — that lovely window which commanded the view of the woods and water, so grand and so beautiful. Surrounded she was, as we saw her at first, by every object that taste and luxury could combine, to adorn a ladye's bower. She had of late become very thoughtful — she

did not ask herself why — it seemed so natural to be thoughtful, with her heart and head so full of subjects to think about.

She took no account of the hours thus spent, and there was no one who loved or cared enough about her, to observe them.

She had, indeed, been accustomed, since her emancipation from the school-room, to spend a good deal of time in her own boudoir, into which she permitted no governess, uninvited, to intrude. This time had been idled away, she knew not how, playing with her dog, feeding and chatting to her birds, gossiping with Esther, reading a few idle books, looking out of the window and yawning.

There was a change now from doing little to doing nothing, and yet she never yawned.

Ennui, weariness, vacuity — they were at least gone.

She would lie for hours idle, half extended, almost motionless, upon a little couch close by the window, hidden from view herself by the muslin curtains, gazing upon the landscape below, yet seeming scarcely to see it. Now and then — nay, sadly more often, than a friend, if she had possessed one — a mother, if she had been blessed with one — would have liked — she sighed.

But she never yawned.

When she appeared down stairs, there was a certain

sadness and darkness around her eyes, which was inexpressibly beautiful — at least, he thought it so. He observed what nobody else seemed to trouble themselves about, and with the deepest interest.

What could have so saddened and so softened that brilliant, flashing, haughty face, of triumphant beauty?

The Magdalene might thus have looked — but here was no Magdalene.

Was she ill? He longed, yet could not presume to ask. He marvelled at the evident want of observation on the part of the governesses; almost longed to inquire from them, but dared not.

Once or twice those darkened eyes had caught his, fixed upon her with an anxious, sympathising look of pity and interest. His had been instantly withdrawn, hers as instantly dropped. She would not look that way again, but his eyes were irresistibly attracted towards her. He was an artist, you know, and it was his business to watch what was so beautiful.

* * * *

This evening, which we are now arrived at, she had been sitting, or half lying at her window for a long time. Her eyes following in an absent manner, sometimes the waving outline of the trees; sometimes the rippling waves of the lake, as they sparkled in the sun, whilst the little waterfowl were playing about and making a thousand dimples in the water; the soft sound

of the winds in the woods soothing her, though she heard them not —

Not vacant or unoccupied, for her mind was teeming with thoughts and her heart with feelings. It was a busy life that was going on within, though so quiet externally.

Suddenly a form is seen by the side of the water.

Why does she start? and why does the colour fly to her cheek, as if she had been doing some wrong thing sitting there?

And why does she fall back, that she may not by possibility be seen? and why does she push forward the muslin curtain, and, hidden behind it, watch till the figure is out of sight?

And why, then, does she heave a deep, deep sigh? and, like one that has suddenly taken her resolution, spring up and prepare to go down; and then stop, listen, and hesitate, as if she could not summon resolution enough for the enterprise?

She stood in this way till the sun had sunk so low that it was plain, if she intended to visit the saloon at all, she must lose no more time. The evening was drawing on fast; he would be coming back, and the governesses would be about again. So making a desperate effort, she opened the door for the last time, and looking round like Margaret when she stole down the stairs, she slid noiselessly along luckily meeting no one, and laying her hand upon the lock of the saloon door, after one more hasty glance, entered, and closed it after her.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Oh! wally, wally, my gay goshawk,
Gin thy featherings be sheen,
And wally, wally, my master dear,
Gin you look pale and thin."

OLD BALLAD.

It was a beautiful and singular-looking room, somewhat narrow in proportion to its length, which gave it rather the appearance of a gallery.

On one side a bow, or which, from its size, might properly be called a *bay*, was thrown out; with long narrow windows, almost deserving the name of lancet windows, which reached from the ceiling to the floor. They were rounded at the top, and from their height and length, gave a peculiar but very pleasant aspect to the room. These windows were separated from each other by partitions wide enough to admit of rich arabesques being painted upon them, filled with flowers, groups of birds, mermaids, little loves, and compositions of that *riante* description.

Outside the windows a living screen of twisting branches of vines, magnolias, clematis, and other creeping plants was arranged, so as to soften, but not exclude the light.

This fine *bay* was exactly opposite to the entrance door, and was the first object that met her eye upon entering the room.

This part of the task was completely finished, and the place had been cleared of scaffoldings, ladders, tables, paints, and brushes, and other ropes and pulleys of this beauteous construction. It opened upon her — the last ray of the sun just shining over the woods behind it — with an effect that struck her almost motionless through admiration and pleasure.

It was, indeed, well done.

There was a harmony of colour, a justness of proportion in the ornaments, a grace, richness, and inexhaustible fancy in the designs, a bright and festive profusion of sweet entangled forms and colours, which is the soul of this species of decoration. Then, the *bay* itself was so beautiful. Those long, lofty, narrow windows, with their arched tops, extending from ceiling to floor, shining there like vast gems framed in this multitudinous abundance of forms and flowers!

She stood there some time, quite amazed at the beauty of this creation; and her heart was beating very, very fast.

When she had satisfied herself with the picture before her, she cast her eyes round the room.

This was still quite incomplete. The opposite wall had, however, been begun upon. Of the subjects intended to occupy the centre of the principal panels, some were finished, others merely sketched in more or less slightly; others in various states of progress: but this part of the room was so encumbered with the necessary machinery

for the work, that it was not possible to judge of the effect of each several picture without going up close to the wall, and looking at one after the other.

She therefore crossed the room, and looked first over the paintings in the piers of the bay; but these being all arabesques, beautiful as they appeared, were not exactly what she had been so desirous to see. They had not the *mind* of the painter written in them. It was the pictures for the panels that she had come down to look at, of which she had already heard so much; for Mademoiselle, who was a constant visitor in the saloon, was never weary of discussing their merits with the artist.

Among other things, Mademoiselle had rallied Du Chastel upon a certain face belonging to a young girl, which she declared was introduced, wherever possible, into every one of his compositions. He had not denied the fact, but had put it aside, seeming rather vexed, than embarrassed, at the accusation.

This was an object of intense curiosity with Evelyn.

A girl with long fair hair, falling in curls round her neck — that was the description.

She glanced round the bay window, as I said, lingering a little before she proceeded, with a sort of reluctance, to verify the fact which she expected an examination of the pictures would disclose.

But at last her impatience got the better of her, and she began to look at the first panel upon the right-hand side, which was entirely finished.

The subject was from the Decamerone, and beautifully treated.

She was not ignorant of the Decamerone, through selected portions. She had learned the occasion of the meeting, and the way in which these fugitives from despair and death passed away their time; and it was with delight she looked at that Italian garden, with all its lovely ornaments of trees and fountains, temples and flowers, which she saw represented with so much delicacy of fancy before her.

In this picture the groups of figures were of small size; the attention of the painter seemed to have been given more to the representation of the delicious scenery itself than of its inhabitants. But, seated upon the grass, there was a group of female figures, graceful and beautiful, and among them, but with her face turned from the spectator, most certainly there was the girl, with the long curls of fair hair falling round her neck and shoulders.

Evelyn went from picture to picture, but the figure pursued her like a fatality; indistinctly portrayed, perhaps, sometimes in the background, sometimes merely sketched, but always there.

A few of the paintings were quite, others left partly done. It appeared as if the artist had worked just as the inclination and fancy of the moment prompted.

But she was soon attracted to the farther end of the room by three panels that appeared to be completed;

and, as she approached them, she saw that they were exquisitely finished — looked, indeed, as if this had been a work of love to the painter.

The subject was the touching and simple story of the goshawk. The young man, in his deep poverty, is honoured by a visit from his mistress, and kills his only possession — save one the only living thing that he loves, and that loves him upon earth — rather than have nothing wherewith to entertain her.

The first picture was the meeting of the lordly lady and the ruined young gentleman.

The second — he kills the goshawk.

The third — she discovers what he has done.

The compositions were really exquisite in design and expression. There was a simple pathos in them worthy of the story.

The face and attitude of the young man spoke volumes of passion — deep, most intense, most true.

The lady was no longer the young girl of the former pictures, but idealized, as it were, into what that young girl in womanhood might have become.

Evelyn stood before these paintings like one fascinated.

What passion spoke in the eyes and gestures of that youth, whom she identified with him who had created this picture?

The purity, the chivalric self-devotion, approaching to adoration, were expressed in lines so touching, simple,

and true. The lady interested her less. She turned with a sort of mournful, hopeless curiosity, to examine the features of one thought worthy to inspire a sentiment like that in the tale.

There she stood, graceful in her ripened womanhood. The hair now of a warmer hue than in the earlier representations, like the brown which the sun paints upon the ripening filbert, fell still in large, long beautiful curls around her; her head was without the slightest other ornament, there was not even a flower!

This then was Du Chastel's ideal. This was the woman he loved, or could love.

Was this ever-recurring face and form a portrait, or an imagination? Had he already met — or had he still to meet — the creature worthy enough, pure enough, graceful enough, good enough, to win him?

She sighed, and turned away.

And returned and gazed again. She could not take her eyes from it. She could not tear herself from the place.

Oh! why was she what she was? — what she had been? Why had she not been born and reared in those scenes of struggle, difficulty, heroic endurance, sorrow and suffering — what mattered it how great — that might have reared her as others had been reared, to a something worthy the possessor of a heart like his? Instead of being what she was.....

A mere idle, vain, luxurious girl, living for the

emptiness of the passing day, without one worthy thought or object in the world.

No wonder he did not care to speak to her.

No wonder he preferred even Fierville and Allardice to her! They, at least, were doing something. They were but governesses — and very indifferent ones — but they were doing something! Getting their own livings!

It was plain even this he respected — poorly as it was done. It was better than herself. She was nothing.

She was standing thus, her eyes still fixed upon the pictures, lost in reflections and regrets such as these, when she heard the lock of the door move, and turning round saw it open, and the artist entered.

He did not at first observe that she was there, for the twilight had drawn on since she had been in the room — too much occupied to observe for how long a time.

But a faint exclamation which escaped her, made him turn his head that way; he saw, and came up to her instantly.

He guessed how she had been engaged, and said, with unaffected pleasure in his tone, but with the deepest respect in his manner —

“Have you been doing me the honour to cast an eye over my poor pictures?”

She felt her old shyness creeping over her, but

thought it only due to herself to affect an unconscious ease, which she was far from feeling.

"Yes," she said. "I have curiosity like the rest of my sex; and Mademoiselle has talked so much about what has been done, that I could not resist the wish to have a look at the room."

"It is scarcely fair to the humble workman to take him thus by surprise. If he could have guessed that Miss Marston took the slightest interest in his labours, and intended him the honour of a visit, he would have taken care that things should have been a little better prepared for her reception."

"One part of the room is finished, I believe. It is cleaned out; it looks very beautiful."

"Does it please you? Am I so happy as ... that is, I mean ... do you like it? It must have many faults. It is my first serious attempt."

"It is so beautiful, that I do not know how to express how beautiful I think it! — and yet..."

"Yet!" pressing a little forward earnestly. She thought he looked for the moment like the young man of the goshawk.

"I think," ... and she hesitated a little in her turn.

Ah, La Bruyère! what is that you say about the first time that two people feel that they are alone?

"I think that the pictures in the panels will be still more beautiful — I mean have a higher sort of beauty in them than ... the first one for instance."

"And these?" he said; for this story of the goshawk was his favourite work. The thing he thought best done of any in his life. He felt jealous for it as an artist; not in the least dreaming, as a man, of the impression it might have made upon her.

"And these?"

"Oh, Mr. Du Chastel! There can but be one opinion upon *them*."

"Do you think so? — Are you so very good as to be pleased with them?" anxiously.

"I think it impossible for creation to be more beautiful."

"Are you so very good — so very good?" looking excessively gratified. "I confess they are the works of my predilection I put all that was in me into them."

"Did you?" suddenly turning round, and looking at him with one of those flashes which, armed, as he thought himself, it was so difficult to withstand.

"Did you?" then as instantaneously dropping her eyes and turning away — "I thought you had."

There was silence for a short time. Then, with the natural desire of one who has met with un hoped-for sympathy, to imbibe a little more of that nectar upon which genius exists, he said,

"Might I ask which of the three pictures has found most favour in your very indulgent judgment?"

At that she looked at them again.

"It is hard to say. — Why must one always make a choice? — I cannot."

"Do you like the attitude of the female figure in the left-hand picture? It was very long before I could satisfy myself — Does it express — what I intended it to represent — the melting down of a heart once so cold and lofty — but that is, perhaps, impossible!"

"The face is very beautiful," was her answer, urged on by a sort of mad determination to learn something more. Little cared she for the pictures in comparison — what she wanted was to learn the *truth*.

"The face is very beautiful. I want to ask — I should like to know — is it painted from a remembrance, from something you have seen, or is it a mere ideal of your own mind? — I don't know how artists manage these things," she added, as a sort of excuse for her curiosity.

"The face is not an exact portrait of any one I ever saw, but it is idealised from one I shall never forget," he said.

It fell upon her heart like that cold poison — a drop of which kills.

She felt desperate. She was not one exercised in self-command. She went on.

"The face! ... But of course it is of some one you know very well."

"No, I never saw her but once. — That is three

times in one brief eighteen hours, and I have never seen her since."

"That sounds like a very romantic story."

"It is a romantic story," was the answer.

"And you never forgot her? — The girl of the long curls in the other pictures? She wore long curls, like those, when you saw her —"

"Yes."

"Was she very beautiful?"

"She was so to me."

"And —"

"I had the happiness to do her some small service."

"And your name is Du Chastel."

"Most certainly," and he smiled. "Is there anything in the name which should prevent my doing a small service?"

"You do not know what you did," she said, a little wildly. "You saved a life."

"Miss Marston?"

"You need not think any more about her; that girl is so changed, that if you were to see her again, I am certain you would not know her..... Men fancy themselves all constancy to one image," she went on impetuously; "and they forget as soon as they are away."

"I do not forget, at least," he said gravely. "She may be changed; possibly is so — but, changed or not, I would give half my existence to meet her again."

Her eyes gave the sudden glance up.

A strange expression of exultation flashed into the face — then paled away into sadness.

“You think so now; but if you saw her, I know it would be different — I feel sure it would be different. — I say she is so changed that you would not know her.”

“Changed or not changed, let me see her. I care not — she may be deformed, blighted, marked with seams, crippled, withered — she will be unchanged to me. I feel it — I know it. Oh, Miss Marston, you have dragged it out of me at last! Only let me see her — only let me hear her voice. It is all I ask — *herself!* To see — *herself* — all I ask — *herself!* it is all to me.”

“You would not even know her voice.”

He turned away, vexed and angry, at this resolute incredulity.

“People are made so differently,” he said; “one human being cannot judge for another. I am as certain as that I stand here,” he went on passionately, “that might I but see her once more, my soul would leap to hers. I should know her among ten thousand. I should feel her presence in the pit of darkness. Wherever she is, that is home, life, light to me. I am a mere pilgrim upon earth, without heart and without hope, till I meet her again. Only let me meet her once — and I am content to die!.....

"Forgive me — I strangely forget myself," he went on; "excuse me, I am very unpardonably disordered. I am a little insane, I believe, upon that theme....."

"I think you are."

How cold! how passionless! how immoveable!

"I think you said you saved her life at the risk of your own — just as she was about to be trampled to death —"

"Did I say so? I scarcely recollect what I said; but the idea that you actually knew her drove me wild....."

"Did I say so? I scarcely recollect. — How should I know her?"

"You spoke as if you did."

"Did I? — You must have mistaken me, then; all I said was, I believe, that I was certain, if you saw her, you would not know her again."

"You said she was so much changed! How could you know she was so much changed?"

"How? Why, does not everybody change?"

"It was more cruel to trifle with me in this manner than Miss Marston is aware," he said, in a cold, offended tone; and turning away, he went up to a table, and began to occupy himself with mixing and arranging his colours.

"Many people are often more cruel than they are aware of," was what she answered.

And making the young painter a slight, and, as it

seemed to him, somewhat haughty curtsey, she quitted the room.

* * * * *

She came down to supper; but her face was tied up in a quantity of fine lace and lawn, so that nothing was to be seen of it but her eyes — and they were strangely bright and restless.

“What is the matter, dearest Miss Marston?” began Mrs. Allardice, anxiously; “the face-ache?”

“Yes — something aches about me. I did not like to expose my face; don’t be uneasy, goody dear. I shall be able to come down, as usual, may be to-morrow, or in a day or two, when I am hardened a little to it.”

“But, my dear, this is quite a sudden attack. I had no idea of it in the least, or I would never have allowed you to stay out in the damp every evening, as you have lately done.”

“No, it is not so sudden as you think ... and perhaps that’s the very reason, my good woman, that I kept it a secret from you, for fear you should forbid those evening walks, which I am afraid have not done it any good.”

“I do hope you will not take any more.”

“I don’t think I shall — but I am quite uncertain how it will turn out. The best thing I can do, at present, is to smother it all up in lace.”

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 the man.

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 in a quantity of the face and jaw, so that nothing was
 to be seen of it but her eyes and they were strangely
 bright and restless.

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 Mr. Allister, anxiously, "the doctor?"

"Yes — something about me: I did not like
 to expose my face; don't be uneasy, goodly dear: I shall

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END OF VOL. I.



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